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Captain Ernest W. Winther

OBSERVATIONS OF SAN FRANCISCO BAY FROM 1900 TO 1971

An Interview Conducted by  
Ruth Teiser

Copy Number 1

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Division Engineer Col. Edwin H. Marks awarding  
the Exceptional Civilian Service Citation to  
Ernest W. Winther. June 1946.



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## PREFACE

## San Francisco Bay Maritime History Series

The following interview is one of a series of tape-recorded recollections devoted to the history of San Francisco Bay in the first half of the twentieth century. This was an especially colorful, active period of momentous technological and sociological change in American maritime affairs, and San Francisco Bay reflected the period well. For the economic historian, the reminiscences illustrate the changes in San Francisco Bay that took place in response to worldwide maritime conditions and to changes in California; for the maritime buff, they are full of the bustle, color and variegated characters of a lively shipping port serving deep-water, coastwise, and river and bay traffic.

Thanks are extended to the Crowley Launch and Tug Company for permission to research in their extensive scrapbook collection and for the help and advice given by members of the firm over the years that the series has been in progress. Our gratitude also to the staff of the San Francisco Maritime Museum for the use of their historical documentation and for their help in checking out names, dates, and facts.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, director of The Bancroft Library.

Willa K. Baum  
Department Head  
Regional Oral History Office

11 September 1971  
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San Francisco Bay Maritime History Series

Thomas Crowley, Recollections of the San Francisco Waterfront,  
1967

Captain William Figari, San Francisco Bay and Waterfront, 1900-  
1965, 1969

Captain William J. McGillivray, Tugboats and Boatmen of California,  
1906-1970, 1971

Captain Ernest W. Winther, Observations of San Francisco Bay from  
1900 to 1971, 1972





## INTRODUCTION

Ernest W. Winther was born in Oakland, California in 1890, and, except for a few years during his childhood, his whole life until his retirement in 1958 was oriented toward the water. Most of his childhood was spent at lighthouse stations where his father was employed: Lime Point, Point Bonita, the Farallones and Southampton Shoal. While still living with his father at the Southampton Shoal lighthouse, he started working at various jobs on the Bay, for shorter and longer periods, and continued until 1929 when he joined the Army Engineers' service for the second time. In this interview he tells of many of those jobs on the Bay and inland waterways and up and down the coast. If some dates are uncertain, it is because his experiences were so varied. Sometimes he worked only briefly for a company, then returned to it later. Sometimes he worked off and on at more than one job during the same period. Throughout he observed his environment with care. The ecology of the Bay and its shores were of interest to him and remain a concern. His recollections of the Farallon Islands between 1903 and 1907 are of particular interest. Some of his photographs of the islands are reproduced here, and more have been copied for deposit in the Bancroft Library. Also of special significance are his observations on the changes in the Bay and its surroundings since this century's beginning.

The interview was suggested to the Regional Oral History Office by Mrs. Helene Erhardt of Oakland, who had heard Captain Winther recall many of the matters he discussed here. Her recommendation was supported by Captain Stanley N. Ohlin, U.S.N., who has known Captain Winther since just after World War II when he served as mate aboard the Army Engineers' hydrographic survey vessel, the H. L. Demeritt, with Captain Winther as skipper.

Captain Winther is an alert, good-humored man who, according to the interviewer's observation, must have gone about his work without being easily ruffled, and always with an interest in the world immediately around him. He was interviewed at his small ship-shape home in East Oakland (where he had lived alone since his wife's death), on January 20 and 30, and February 6, 1970. The transcript was sent to Captain Winther October 30, 1971. On November 19, 1971 a final session was held for the purpose of filling in data related to Captain Winther's earlier reminiscences and adding data on certain photographs. Most of this information was inserted into the body of the interview during the final editing.



The interviewer rearranged some sections of the interview so that they would be adjacent to related material. Captain Winther made some corrections in details in the transcript, but no major changes.

Ruth Teiser

6 July 1972  
Regional Oral History Office  
486 The Bancroft Library  
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### Family Background

Teiser: I wonder if we could, to start . . .

Winther: I like to answer questions. I can't very well, you know, just remember events that come up. Where would you like to start?

Teiser: Well, with your full name.

Winther: Ernest William Winther.

Teiser: And you were born . . .

Winther: In 1890 in a little house on the east side of Sixth Street in Oakland, between Broadway and Washington. Our father was in a fire house, that Number Six, down there a few doors away. He was in the fire department in Oakland for a good twenty years. That's when Oakland had a volunteer system. It was years later when they put on regular firemen.

Teiser: Did he become an employed fireman after the volunteer system ended?

Winther: For a short time. Then he left and went into the lighthouse service.

Teiser: What had his occupation been before?

Winther: Well, twenty years at sea, before the mast.

Teiser: Oh, really? Where had he been born?

Winther: In Oslo, Norway.

Teiser: What was your father's name?



Winther: Thomas Ludwig Winther.

Teiser: How did he happen to come to California?

Winther: Well, like all young people in those Scandinavian countries, they have to leave home early in life, you know. There's nothing to hold 'em back in their home environment, so they travel around the world, and most of 'em go to sea. His relatives were shipowners, you know, so he had a good opportunity to go to sea under his own relatives' command.

So he followed that for twenty years, and then he left it in Australia and worked in the sheep ranches in Australia. And then he met up with a colored fella named Jack Johnson, the pugilist. So they went together to Seattle and they hung around there for a while, and this Jack Johnson, he drifted to different parts of the country and became a professional pugilist.

Teiser: He'd been a seaman, had he?

Winther: Well, I don't know whether he was a seaman or not, but they met in Australia. So my father went to work up in Seattle with the gas companies up there, and that industry just started -- it's all young you know -- so he stayed up there for, I guess, ten or fifteen years. Then he found his way down here and he went up in the Mother Lode country like hundreds of others who left their jobs locally and went up there, but he didn't make anything out of that.

Teiser: About when was that, when he went up there?

Winther: Oh, that was in 1885, I guess. He stayed up there for a while. I guess he got tired of it and found his way down here and located in Oakland.

Teiser: Had he married before that?

Winther: Yes, he had married up in Seattle. I had a brother [Carl] who was born up there.

Teiser: And you were born after the family moved here, then. What day were you born?

Winther: The fifth of June.





Teiser: Your father was working then as a fireman here?

Winther: Yeah. Oh, he had different jobs, such as bartender. He'd pick up anything, you know -- he'd work at most anything that come along.

Teiser: He'd not gone to sea after he'd married, is that it?

Winther: No. He give it up. So after a while -- after pretty near twenty years in the Oakland Fire Department, he joined the lighthouse service, which was then under the Department of Commerce and Labor. So then as time went on of course he'd get shifted around to the different stations, locally here: Lime Point; he was at Point Bonita and Farallon Islands, and the last was Southampton Shoals.

Teiser: What was your early life, then?

Winther: My early life was in the lighthouse service also. Not as an employee, but I had to follow him wherever he went. Kind of young, you know . . .

My mother passed away when I was seven,\* and I had no regular home, and I was farmed out with different people keeping me, you know, and I finally wound up in the Ladies' Relief Society at 43rd Street between Broadway and Telegraph [in Oakland]. And I was there for quite some time. And he joined the lighthouse service, and come and got me and took me out at ten years of age.\*\*

Teiser: So from seven to ten you were out of the family?

Winther: Oh, yes. I was farmed out to this home, you know.

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\*In 1898.

\*\*This was Thomas L. Winther's second period of employment in the lighthouse service. He had been in it from about 1891 to about 1895. See pages 23-24.



Point Bonita, 1900-1903

Teiser: So then at ten you went where with your father?

Winther: Point Bonita Lighthouse. And I had that whole country to myself. It was very wild in them days. And then the government thought to locate some forts over there and they started building some fortifications in 1902, '01 and '02. And then we left there. After putting in I think three years there we moved to the Farallon Islands.

Teiser: Let me ask about Point Bonita. At that time what kind of a light was there?

Winther: It was a fixed light, and a steam fog signal.

Teiser: What powered it?

Winther: Steam. Had boilers. Generated their own steam.

Teiser: So you had to keep supplying it with fuel?

Winther: Well, they burnt coal in them days.

Teiser: Did they bring you coal then, and you had to keep stoking?

Winther: The lighthouse tender brought coal over there.

Teiser: Where did they unload it?

Winther: Right there. Used to have a dock on the rocks. See there's no . . . there wasn't any mud or sand to drive piles in, so they built this wharf up on the rocks, and on this dock they had a big derrick so the boom reached over to the boat and they could hoist all the material out of the boat up on the dock, and then from there they stored it in the fog signal or specially made place for sacks of coal.

Teiser: You had to do that on a calm day, didn't you?

Winther: Oh yes, when you land around the rocks it has to be more or less smooth so it wouldn't harm the boat.



- Winther: You lay there in a small boat. The mother ship anchors off aways. Then they lower the small boat, what they call a work boat, and they fill that. It'll hold so many tons of coal, and . . .
- Teiser: Oh, and bring it in close to the cliff?
- Winther: That's it. The same was at the Farallon Islands. All material is handled that way too. There's no place to drive in a pile out there. Can't make any wharf out in the water. Fact is, it wouldn't do, because the high surf would soon wreck it.
- Teiser: There was a lot of manpower involved?
- Winther: It took a lot of manpower in them days; they didn't have the facilities as they have today to do anything. You'd start from scratch for most anything. In them days it wasn't too expensive. But to duplicate that same thing today, it'd be too costly.
- Teiser: How many of you were there at Point Bonita?
- Winther: It was called a four-man station -- four families. So the transportation there -- to get into town to get the mail and provisions, which was at that time Sausalito, [they] had a horse and wagon -- horse and cart, and any one of the lighthouse keepers that wanted to go to town, they'd go down and hitch up the horse and cart themselves, and drive in town. If they stayed overnight they'd have to leave the horse at a livery stable.
- Teiser: Was that before they put the tunnel through?
- Winther: No, that tunnel was there for many, many years before. It joins Fort Baker and Cronkhite. It joins 'em, but it's 'way up in the valley. How they come to get around to digging that hole through solid rock I don't know, unless it was mainly for the only access to Point Bonita lighthouse. That's the only traffic that was in them days when that tunnel was built, going out to Point Bonita lighthouse. So that was many, many years before my time.
- Teiser: Now they have a signal on it, but I'm sure they didn't then -- a light signal . . .



Winther: What light?

Teiser: A traffic signal, for one-way traffic. Suppose you got in the middle of that with a buggy and met another buggy?

Winther: Well . . . in them days, you were the only traffic! [Laughter] You didn't have to wait for anyone like it is today.

Teiser: How long did it take you to get to Sausalito from there then?

Winther: Whatever the horse felt like -- the speed was the horse. Whatever he felt like. He wanted to walk, well he walked. He wants to trot, he trots. Well, it took about an hour, hour and a half.

Teiser: Did you enjoy living out there?

Winther: Well, that was paradise! What more do you want? I had a dog, and acres and acres and acres of wild country, and there was a place to shoot ducks and a place that was full of rabbits and deer. That was a paradise for a young kid ten years of age.

Teiser: Did you go to school?

Winther: No.

Teiser: That was paradise, too, I'll bet. [Laughter]

Winther: Well, you know, a young fella never thinks of school.

### The Farallones, 1903-1907

Teiser: So, you went directly from there to the Farallones in 1903?

Winther: Yes. No school there either. I'd been there before, with my family, from when I was one, about four years. Before my mother died.





Teiser: On this second stay, was your older brother with you?

Winther: No, he was running around the country. He was working down at Lucky Baldwin's race track, and San Luis Obispo, down that way.

Teiser: So it was just you and your father. How many families lived there?

Winther: Four.

Teiser: Your father was what -- what was his title?

Winther: He was second -- let's see -- there was a first assistant; he was second assistant, and in a four-group station they run as keeper, first assistant, second assistant and third assistant. And the third assistant is low man.

Teiser: Where did you all live?

Winther: We had nice quarters there. Houses. Of course they had two houses, upstairs and downstairs apartments. Two families in each house.\* The rain water was our supply of water.

Teiser: Oh, really? They didn't bring any over?

Winther: Not like it is today. Coast Guard brings water out to them.

Teiser: How'd you collect it?

Winther: They had about an acre of ground laid out in concrete, and it had a slope going down to one corner, and of course the water ran into a cistern, and being that it was a steam station they had plenty of power there to pump it in different tanks and different systems. As that main cistern got filled up, they unloaded it by distributing it around to other cisterns and tanks they had located.\*\* Mostly gravity. You got your water then by gravity.

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\*See photograph 3.

\*\*See photographs 1 and 4.



Teiser: So you didn't have to carry buckets around.

Winther: Oh, no.

Teiser: It was also a coal-powered steam horn there, was it?

Winther: Yes. That's what they call a trumpet, a siren. It's a monstrous big siren. I guess the horns are about twenty feet long.\* And that heads out to the main ship traffic, so the sound goes out on the traffic going west. So any boats coming east would hear it too, but they'd have to trust to luck that the sound -- the wind -- would allow the sound to go both south and north. Sometimes the wind blowing in one direction blows the sound away.

Teiser: It was heading east?

Winther: No, it was heading west, but any vessel coming east would run into that sound -- would pick it up, and then they'd locate themselves.

Teiser: Was there a light there too?

Winther: Oh yes, the light was on top of the hull -- 365 feet high.\*\*

Teiser: This is a four-section panorama of the Farallones.\*\*\* When was that taken?

Winther: That was taken in 1901 or 1902 from the hill on the northwestern end of the main island.

Teiser: In the third from the left panel . . .

Winther: That's the rain shed there.

Teiser: That big flat while thing is the rain shed?

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\*See photograph 5.

\*\*See photographs 1 and 8.

\*\*\*See photograph 1.



Winther: That captures the fresh water.

Teiser: In this photograph of the fog signal you were mentioning,\* who's that standing in the doorway?

Winther: My brother.

Teiser: There were two horns.

Winther: Two horns, and that's the way she looks altogether. And this picture\*\* -- that panorama was taken from the top of the highest point in this picture.

Teiser: The residences are at the right. What's the building at the left?

Winther: Fog signal.

Teiser: What's the building to the right of the fog signal?

Winther: That's where they stored the coal for the furnace.

Teiser: How did you like it out there on the Farallones after being at Point Bonita? Was it as much fun?

Winther: No. In six months you get sick and tired. You really felt like you was in a prison.

Teiser: Too confined, eh?

Winther: You were limited in going any place -- very limited.

Teiser: Did you ever come to the City?

Winther: Well, they'd come ashore once a year.

Teiser: Only once a year?

Winther: That's all. And then you had to stay two weeks. They would let out contracts to different companies -- the lowest bidder -- to take mail and provisions and

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\*Photograph 5.

\*\*Photograph 4.



- Winther: passengers out there and back. And they'd run out every two weeks if the weather permitted. And being that it was a four-man station, you can't leave to go ashore. Nobody went ashore too often. So they'd all figure out, well, they'd each take two weeks a year to come ashore.
- Teiser: Was it pretty much of an event to have the boat come?
- Winther: Oh that was a big day -- you'd call that Boat Day. That was a big day! Of course you expect mail, and I guess a new supply of provisions, whatever you'd ordered previously.
- Teiser: What kind of companies had those contracts?
- Winther: Well there was Goldberg-Bowen for provisions, and different -- such as ship supply houses in San Francisco.
- Teiser: Who ran them?
- Winther: The boats? Well, different small companies. Once in a while the Black Stacks. There was two opposition tow companies here then called the Red Stacks and the Black Stacks. The Black Stacks was operated by the Spreckels -- J. D. Spreckels -- company.\* And the Red Stacks by the Merchants' Exchange. But eventually Mr. Crowley bought out the Black Stacks and operated the whole thing himself under the Red Stacks.
- Teiser: Did those companies have the contracts?
- Winther: At first. Finally they give it up. It was too costly. There wasn't enough money in it for them to get a tug out there, so the smaller companies that had little gas schooners [took over].
- Teiser: Who were they?
- Winther: Well, I don't recall the names of the companies now,

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\*See photograph 6.





Winther: but I remember one of the boats, a two-masted gas schooner called President. They went out to the islands. They held that contract for about a year. These contracts were twelve months at a time.

Teiser: It didn't take a heavy tug to get in there?

Winther: No. That would have been better, but they wouldn't take the contract to do that.

### Tugboats and Pilot Boats

Winther: They [the tugs] would come out there and look for ships. They'd come out there and lay around the island -- of course there was nothing but sailing ships in them days -- look for ships that was wanting to be towed into San Francisco.

Teiser: Did they have much rivalry? Did they try to jockey for position?

Winther: No, not so much for position, but for the chance of getting a tow. They'd come down in their price.

Teiser: Oh, they'd go aboard and bargain?

Winther: No, they'd go alongside and holler through a megaphone. Then it was up to the skipper to take his choice, which one he wanted. Sometimes they'd prefer a friend. They get acquainted after they'd come around the world a couple of times. They'd stop at different ports, and you get acquainted, and you favor your best pals. That's the way that would work.

Teiser: I think you were mentioning the other day how much the fees were.

Winther: They were only from five dollars to fifty dollars. Just according to how big the vessel was and how the weather was, and what you could get out of it -- what the skipper was willing to pay to get in -- how anxious he was. Sometimes they'd wait, if they wasn't so anxious; they'd wait til the wind was in their favor so they could sail in themselves, save that cost.



Teiser: They did?

Winther: Oh, yeah. Some of the vessels sailed in and out by themselves.

Teiser: Did it take a master who was acquainted with this harbor to sail in and out, or could he do it by charts?

Winther: Well the ones that was acquainted with it would take it onto themselves to come in and out under their own sail power, but a stranger would wait for a tug. We didn't have pilots in them days. Now the pilot boat goes out there and lays, and you take your turn. The pilots each take a turn -- the next ship comes along it's his to take you in. It's controlled by the state of course.

Teiser: Were there independent tugs as well as Red Stack and Black Stack?

Winther: No, that was the only two companies. And they had a nice fleet of tugs; each company had a nice fleet of tugs.

Teiser: Did they have good operators?

Winther: Oh, yes.

Teiser: They knew their business?

Winther: Oh, yes. They had to know it here. This is a treacherous bar out here. Very treacherous bar. Unless you know it thoroughly, you're going to get into trouble sooner or later.

Teiser: I remember a story about going out to meet the boats -- a story about Mr. Tom Crowley, Sr., being so anxious to get aboard a ship that he rushed on before it had been cleared by quarantine, and he was kept overnight. [Laughter]

Winther: Well, that happened several times. Oh yeah, that's the story.

Teiser: How would he have gotten aboard? Would they have lowered a ladder for him?



Winther: Oh, yeah. A ladder in them days -- what they call a Jacob's ladder -- it's just two ropes with some rungs in between, and it's kind of a trick to climb up one of them so you won't turn a somersault. Now they have a companionway they lower down, and there are steps so you can walk up that way.

Teiser: Oh I see; they don't do that anymore?

Winther: No they don't, outside. For the pilots they do. And when a pilot goes alongside of that ship with the Jacob's ladder down, in a small boat, and when the ship rolls, he's on the lee side -- it's generally in the trough of the sea, and it has a tendency of rolling a little bit. So as that ship rolls down to him, he grabs the highest rung, and hangs on, and climbs up from there. Sometimes he'll [laughing] have a mishap and the ship'll roll and he goes under the swell that's making the ship roll there, so he gets a dousing once in a while.

Teiser: If it rolls in the other direction, doesn't he get banged against the side of the ship?

Winther: No. No, that ladder stays right up against the ship.

Teiser: It's fixed to the side of the ship?

Winther: It's not fixed, but it stays there. The ship'll have to roll over 45 degrees before the Jacob's ladder swings. But very few ever roll that far; 15, 20, 30 degrees is a pretty good roll.

#### The Farallones 1903-1907, continued

Teiser: When you went back and forth from the Farallones, how did people get from the launch or the boat to the island, itself?

Winther: These pictures'll tell that story. Here's that landing I told you about.\*

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\*The picture was similar to Photograph 9.



Teiser: Oh, my word! This is the landing?

Winther: Where the small boat comes down here. See, here's the landing. You come in here, and there's one of the small boats. If you can see that picture there. See the skiff. Can you see that skiff hanging there?

Teiser: Yes, I can see the skiff.

Winther: Well, they're lowering it down into the water now. They hoist everything up here and the boom swings around and puts everything on this dock. Here's the landing.

Teiser: Ah, that's a good one -- from below.\* It's marked "Landing, North Farallones, 1904."

Winther: Yes, with the small boat, and there's the dock they lift it on. Now this rock here protected the small boat when it was rough. This used to break the swell down so you lay behind it here and work, but the Coast Guard thought it was a nuisance, and they took it out [laughter] and when they blasted this rock out they couldn't use this landing any more. They had no shelter.

Teiser: How did people then get up and down?

Winther: Well they went up on this rock. There's a little flat rock here, and they landed. They stepped from the skiff. See how smooth it is there? They'd get right on the rock -- on and off right here, see?

Teiser: Oh, I see, people could then walk up and down. Was there a hoist on this stairway?

Winther: No. It's just a steep stairway. And here's [another picture of] that landing in here, and here's the lighthouse -- the light up there.

Teiser: There are two buildings -- what is the one on the left?

---

\*Photograph 9.





Winther: That's the engine -- the boiler room. For the engine.

Teiser: What was the engine used for?

Winther: Hoisting, for the operation of this landing.

Teiser: Oh, I see. What's the other building?

Winther: A boat house. There's a lifeboat stored in there.

Teiser: And on top here is the lighthouse.

Winther: Lighthouse. The approach to that lighthouse is on the other side of that hill. A zig-zag trail. Here's the landing again.\* All of the material for the Naval radio station out there.

Teiser: That's 1903. Is this you on the left?

Winther: Yes. Here's the residence side -- this is the west side of the island.\*\* Here's the foghorn -- I'll tell you about it -- where the trumpets are. And there's the rainshed that catches the fresh water. It's just as much underground as it is above ground. They had that system of storing water in it like that. It keeps very nicely. That's the steam fog signal and there's a ship going out to sea, passing there. This is the railroad with the mule-hauled car.

Teiser: Is that the regular ship route, in that close?

Winther: That's the ship route, yes; that's the track of the vessels going to the Orient.

Teiser: So you could see them coming and going constantly. That must have given a little interest.

Winther: Oh, yeah, that was the only amusement we had,

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\*Photograph 11.

\*\*Photograph 4.



- Winther: outside of talking to the birds. [Laughter] This is another picture of the west end of the island; here are some of the birds, nesting out there.
- Teiser: I came across an article written in the late 1850s. You were right [when we talked earlier.] It said that they were harvesting murre's eggs, not seagull's!
- Winther: There wasn't enough seagull eggs for the market. So they took the murre's. This is the way murre's lay their eggs -- right on the bare rock.
- Teiser: They look as if they were going to roll off.
- Winther: Some of 'em do roll off -- a lot of 'em do roll off, oh yes. This here fellow belonged to the Audubon Society in San Francisco: Milton S. Ray.\* He had a business in San Francisco and his brother invented the oil burner -- the present day oil burners that they use on the steam ships. Milton S. Ray was in charge of a party of three to investigate the bird life on the Farallone Islands.
- Teiser: Now, he's at the right end and at the left end . . .
- Winther: That's me, at about 14 years of age. These two fellows came with him out there -- two fellows from the same society and were investigating these birds and eggs and so forth. I was with 'em -- I was a sort of a guide to show them around where they wanted to go.
- Teiser: You look a good deal like you did then, don't you?
- Winther: Is that so?
- Teiser: What have you got in your hand [in the picture?]
- Winther: That's a murre. See he's holding a bird, Milton S. Ray.
- Teiser: I see that he is.

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\*See also p. 121 and Photograph #12.



Winther: And he's holding a sea parrot. I don't know what he's got. And I'm holding a murre. They're alive you know, 'cause they were almost like pets. And here's the entrance to the cave.\* Now that big hill --

Teiser: . . . the hill under the light . . .

Winther: . . . it's all hollow inside. There's a monstrous big cave in there and that's the entrance to the cave, and that's me there with my hand on the wall of the cave.

Teiser: Oh! That's you holding the cave up. [Laughter]

Winther: This cave here -- the entrance -- there's thousands of birds inside there that fly in for shelter, or I don't know why. While you're going in, if you're not careful -- while they're flying out -- thousands of birds come out and you have to watch that they don't hit you. They'll knock you for a loop.

Teiser: What was that board doing in the cave?

Winther: Well, it's just to crawl on. The soil in there is a little damp.

Teiser: Did you go in there?

Winther: Oh yes! A lot of people went in there. You crawled for about 50 feet on your hands and knees and then you had about another ten or 20 feet that you'd go along on your belly before you'd get to the big room. All colors of mineral in there. It's a monstrous big cave, and the fact is it's a monstrous big room right underneath the mountain here.

Teiser: Right under the light, eh?

Winther: And this is a weather bureau that the government put out there. Tried to detect storms, and so forth, but it was of short duration. Wasn't a success at all.

Teiser: This picture is marked, "1903 Weather Bureau looking

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\*See photograph 13.



- Teiser: south toward Saddle Rock." Saddle Rock is a separate rock off the island?
- Winther: Separate island and it's loaded with sea lions.
- Teiser: Still is, do you think?
- Winther: Oh, yes. Now here's one of the boats that brought provisions out there. Now that boat was a fish tug, belonged to a fish company in San Francisco, and they took the contract one time.
- Teiser: "Mail boat coming in at North Landing, 1903" it says. About how big a boat is that?
- Winther: That boat there is about 100 foot. That's a trawler. That's the kind of steam boats they used to have up and down the coast to catch fish here for the San Francisco market. Until it got too expensive and slow, so they did away with the steam. That's what they call a steam trawler. Then we'd go with that little skiff -- we'd pull out and load the skiff up and pull ashore, and get underneath the hook and hoist it up.
- Teiser: The skiff you rowed, or "pulled" as you said -- how big a boat was the skiff?
- Winther: Well, what one man could handle -- about fourteen foot.
- Teiser: But the provision boats couldn't come up to the hook?
- Winther: No, they had to anchor out in the bay. Now here's another thing queer about the Farallones -- see this wood up here?\* The highest tide, the very highest tide -- comes up to this, see that wet mark? And from here to there is around 200 feet -- distance. Nobody to this day can understand how that big timber, spars of ships and things it consists of -- how it got up there.

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\*Photograph 14.





Tieser: Above the tideline.

Winther: It's been washed up there by a hurricane -- a terrific storm, of many years ago. And it hasn't -- so far as is known -- now this picture was taken in 1900 . . . from that day to this no water has ever touched it.

Teiser: So there was a bigger storm before that than there ever has been since?

Winther: Oh, it must have been a hundred or more years ago -- maybe a couple of hundred years ago -- a big hurricane had hit this coast, and threw that up there. Because it's something very unusual.

And this is a stone house;\* the walls of that house is three feet thick. It's the first house built on the Farallones for the lighthouse service. Two families -- one on each end. See the house is a duplication --

Teiser: Two chimneys. Did you say that had been destroyed?

Winther: Yeah, they blew it up. [Very disgusted tone]

Teiser: Who blew it up?

Winther: Well, I guess the -- whoever had charge of the island during the war. For practice purposes, I guess.

Teiser: It's called, "First stone house on Farallones."

Winther: This is a stone house that the Russians built\*\*-- to live in. That's just one of them.

Teiser: Was it a subterranean house?

Winther: No.

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\*See photograph 15.

\*\*Photograph 7. See also pp. 126-127.



Teiser: These are just the remains of it at that time, 1904?

Winther: No, just the loose rocks piled around in some kind of a form. Here's the way they take oil, kerosene up to the light on top of the hill. They take it up with that mule [on that] zig-zag trail. That's my father there; it's his turn to take up -- 20, 40, 60, 80 -- they take up 100 gallons every week. That's the way they take it up. And here's a good picture -- shows you how the mule operates that track.\*

Teiser: Now the mule pulled provisions up that track from the landing?

Winther: From the landing up to the houses. And that same mule takes the kerosene on that zig-zag trail up to the lighthouse.

Teiser: That was a hard-working mule! [Laughter]

That picture is marked on the back, "Engine and railroad on Farallones.

Winther: That landing you see in these other pictures is right down in there.

Teiser: Below and behind the whole building.

Winther: That track goes right around the whole island, clear around to where the radio station was being built on the south end of the island.

Teiser: Is it still there?

Winther: Yes.

There's the residences again.\*\* Two stories, a family in each apartment.

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\*See photograph 10.

\*\*See photograph 3.



Teiser: Oh, these were wooden houses. Are they still there?

Winther: Oh, yeah. They're still there.

Teiser: What is this little back building?

Winther: It's a little shed. Each house had a shed there.

Teiser: And you lived in the house on the right?

Winther: Upstairs.

Teiser: Does it look like that still?

Winther: Yes. No changes, outside of they built a couple of more sheds back here. And here's the mule in his own pasture. He had the run of the island, when he wasn't working.

Teiser: Was there much around for him to eat?

Winther: Oh, yes, a lot of wonderful grass out there.

Teiser: There seems to be a goat over here, or something.

Winther: There was quite a few goats on the island; then some disease come along and wiped 'em all out.

Teiser: Were they used for milk and meat?

Winther: Yes, and then they later on put rabbits out there for the families. That's that story I told you about the rabbits.

Teiser: Yes. Would you tell it again?

Winther: In 1885 these Russian hare were planted out there purposely for fresh meat for the lighthouse keepers, and in later years the responsibility for those rabbits seemed to fall into the hands of the University of California, whatever department that is over there that takes care of that, and they forbid anybody to touch the rabbits. The Coast Guard out there couldn't even touch one for their own dinners. Why they should do that, no one knows.



Teiser: Wouldn't they multiply too fast?

Winther: No. Oh, no. The seagulls had kept the population down. As I told you before you know, they eat the rabbits.

Teiser: Little rabbits?

Winther: The little ones. So that kept the population down; they never got too many of 'em. If you wanted one, you really had to go hunt 'em with a gun. They'd get wild.

Teiser: When you were a kid did you go rabbit-hunting?

Winther: Oh yes, if we wanted a change of diet, why we'd have to go out and get a rabbit. We'd get tired of fish, abalones, mussels and other sea life.

Teiser: Did you do a lot of fishing?

Winther: Well, yes. According to our appetite. We didn't fish for sport, we just fished for what we wanted to eat. There was all kinds of them out there, you could get quite a variety of fish -- taken from the rocks -- we never went out in a boat. And of course in them days there was a great supply of abalone, mussels, and the water was beautifully clear. No pollution in them days.

Teiser: So you could eat the mussels?

Winther: Yes, we had mussel-feeds all year 'round.

Teiser: Now there's a quarantine much of the year.

Winther: Well, it's on account of that disease that hit 'em -- just deadly poison.

Teiser: How long then did you stay on the Farallones?

Winther: I had two terms out there -- four years each.





Farallone Families, 1893

Winther: The first time we went out there I was one year old.

Teiser: Then it was when you were there first that this family picture was taken, before your mother's death.\*

Winther: That's it. Then we left there and he went -- let's see, where did he go then? He went into something else, I forget what that was, but then in later years, when I was ten years old, then he went back again -- that's when we went back to the same place, the Farallone Islands, again. When I was one year old he was at Goat Island Lighthouse. And then we transferred from Goat Island to the Farallones when I was one year of age. And the boat capsized out there and I almost drowned, right in this channel I told you about. This is where the boat capsized.

Teiser: This is the picture of the "Landing North Farallones, 1904" that we looked at before.\*\*

Winther: Well, that's where the boat capsized in this channel and upturned. Mother and myself in there, and we were under water, and they were watching us from up top here and there was some fellows on the beach here. So they ran out -- when these fellows up there spotted us under water here, these fellows on the beach here ran out and saved us. And that water, of course, is right around 40 degrees all the time -- all the year round, so how I stood it I don't know.

Teiser: This is a good picture of bringing in supplies. They're pulling up some sort of package, aren't they?

Winther: Yes, that's food, or supplies of some kind.

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\*Photograph 2.

\*\*Photograph No. 9.



Teiser: Here's some people down on the landing in the foreground there. They'd walked down the steps, I guess.

Winther: That's the only way to get on and off of the boat is by stepping on the rocks.

Teiser: This picture of the lighthouse keepers' families in 1893\* -- will you identify the people from this left end?

Winther: This is myself, this is my mother, and my father. This is Cain;\*\* he was the lighthouse keeper. That's his family, a baby, and a girl and his wife. That's the captain of the Madrone -- that's the light house tender that used to run out there for the lighthouse service.

Teiser: He's the one standing up higher than any of the others?

Winther: Yes. And that's the first assistant.

Teiser: He's standing up there in a kind of vest, next to the captain?

Winther: Yes. And this is the third assistant down there.

Teiser: He's sitting down in front of the captain and the other assistant with a little girl sitting in front of him.

Winther: Uh huh. And this fellow's name is Kanenne.

Tieser: He's standing up, and he's got a little boy . . .

Winther: That's his little son.

Teiser: In his right arm.

Winther: And this is his wife.

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\*Photograph 2.

\*\*Cyrus J. Cain.



Teiser: At the right end. Who's the other man there sitting down . . .

Winther: I don't know, I think they're crew members off the lighthouse tender. And there's the main engine [the donkey].

Teiser: The main engine's on the right. [Laughter]

Southampton Shoal, 1907-1916

Winther: Then we moved from there to Southampton Shoal.

Teiser: I think you said that the Southampton Shoal light is still in operation but not manned, is that right?

Winther: Yes. It's operated from the shore. I don't think it's operated by sunlight, like some of these buoys.

Teiser: Let's go over a little about your time at Southampton Shoal. Your father then transferred there when you were 17 -- is that right?

Winther: About that, yes.

Teiser: You went along with him, and -- how many people were there?

Winther: Two. That's a two-man station.

Teiser: Could you get back and forth more easily?

Winther: Oh, yes. It was right in the middle of the Bay here, San Francisco Bay, you know, and we had a small boat to go ashore with. First, we had to row it, or pull it, whatever you want to term it, and when it was windy we had to set a sail up, and sail in and sail out. Then later on that got too dangerous so they give us a launch.

Teiser: The nearest place was Richmond, did you say?

Winther: Richmond was our post office address -- that's where we went.



Teiser: How often did you go back and forth for provisions there?

Winther: Well, if the weather permitted we went in about once a week.

Teiser: And there were two families?

Winther: Two families.

Teiser: That sounds not too interesting for a boy of seventeen.

Winther: The first couple of months was fine -- do a lot of fishing and looking around there, but it got so monotonous . . .

Teiser: How big an area did you have to roam?

Winther: Just the platform of the house, that's all.

Teiser: You must have felt imprisoned finally there, did you?

Winther: Oh, that was a place that was . . . if it wasn't for your taste of books and everything, you'd go crazy.

Teiser: Do you read a lot?

Winther: I did then.

Teiser: Where did you get the books?

Winther: Oh, go ashore and buy 'em.

Teiser: How long were you there then?

Winther: Ten years.

Teiser: You must have all had to learn to get along together.

Winther: Well, you sure have to learn that. That's a kind of a trick in itself.

Teiser: You and your father, and who were the other people?





- Winther: Well there was different assistants. They come and go, you know. They get tired and they want to transfer or quit.
- Teiser: Were you yourself employed there finally?
- Winther: Well, when I got old enough to handle things, why I would act as a substitute in case anybody wanted to go ashore and stay for their vacation, or stay a day or two or a week ashore. Then I'd be paid for taking their place. Other than that -- gratis.
- Teiser: [Laughter] Well, you probably did a lot of free work there for the government!
- Winther: You can say that again! Oh, yeah.
- Teiser: There was a light there. Was there a horn also?
- Winther: Yes. Every station has a fog horn.
- Teiser: What was that powered by?
- Winther: It was powered by weight -- operated by clockwork.
- Teiser: Oh, so you had to be constantly pulling weights?
- Winther: You wind it up every -- well . . . a long season of fog, you wind the weights up about every half hour with a crank, and there's about a thousand pounds to wind up. A height of forty feet. And that weight would operate the clockwork and the hammer of this fog signal for to hit the bell. It hit the bell at the rate of about 100 pounds. In later years they took that system out and put in power, air power. Then they had air trumpets. Eliminated the bell.
- Teiser: What operated the light?
- Winther: Kerosene.
- Teiser: Somebody had to do something every half hour when there was fog, is that right?
- Winther: Oh, yeah, you had to keep that going and then keep a watch out. As soon as it cleared up, you know, you had to save on fuel. Of course there was no fuel



Winther: used on the fog signal, but you wouldn't want the bell pounding away there when it was clear.

Teiser: Did the light stay on at all times?

Winther: From sunset to sunrise.

Teiser: In bad weather was it on in daytime?

Winther: No, not in daytime.

Teiser: That's a tremendous fish, isn't it? This picture is labelled on the back, "Ten foot shark caught at Southampton Shoal Lighthouse, S.F. Bay, 1908."

Winther: That's a six foot shark, and that's a twelve foot shark, but the biggest shark ever caught in the Bay I caught right there. It was 18 foot long.

Teiser: When you caught a shark, what did you do with it?

Winther: Well, just killed it and cut it up for crab feed. That shoal was loaded with beautiful big crab, so that was good food for them.

Teiser: What's this ornamental iron railing you're standing against?

Winther: Well, that's the way they designed the building and that's the railing [that] was around the two stories.

Teiser: I see. It was a two-story building . . .

Winther: It was a three-story building but the third story didn't have any platform on it.

That was a common sight to catch these sharks, and to this day you can go out there and -- July and August is a good time to go out there and have sport-fishing for those big sharks.

Teiser: What is this picture?\*

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\*Photograph 16.



- Winther: That's one of the first submarines ever built on this coast. The Grampus.
- Teiser: It says on the back, "First submarine going up Bay to Mare Island, approximately 1910."
- Winther: And here's the way Southampton Shoal looked down there.\*
- Teiser: This is labelled on the back, "1908. Construction barge putting cross-members on piers at Southampton."
- Winther: They were putting those braces on there to hold it. It was built in 1905, and the earthquake came along in 1906 and didn't do much damage other than putting the foundation out of plumb. So they had to dump a lot of rock and rod reinforcements under the five-foot concrete cylinders in order to keep them in line. One cylinder underneath the house there was knocked three feet out of plumb by the earthquake.
- Teiser: And you said that the building is no longer there?
- Winther: It's no longer there. Only the foundation. They have a fog signal and a light on top of it now.
- Teiser: And what happened to the house itself?
- Winther: It's sold, and it's up the river as a club house.
- Teiser: Do you know where, exactly?
- Winther: No, not exactly -- I don't know exactly where it is.
- Teiser: What is this thing next to it, a barge?
- Winther: That's a barge -- contractors working underneath the house. Here's our boat, our launch we had at Southampton Shoal afterwards.
- Teiser: The launch had a little housing on it, sort of . . .

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\*Photograph 17.



Winther: That's the one [in which] we went ashore -- to Point Richmond to get the mail and provisions. Here's an aeroplane I built out there.

Teiser: You built an airplane? How big was it?

Winther: Oh, it was six feet long.

Teiser: How'd you learn how?

Winther: Well, I just went at it.

Teiser: It looks as if it were flying there. Was it?

Winther: It flew, yeah.

Teiser: What powered it?

Winther: A big, heavy rubber band.

Teiser: This is a picture of you and your father and the bell in 1910.

Winther: There's the bird. Canary bird.

Teiser: Oh, I see -- in the cage. Must have been a little company, since you didn't have murrees.

Winther: You know, in them days we didn't have the enjoyment of radios, T V's, or phonographs. Here's one of our boats that we had -- that's one of the sailboats we had at Southampton. That's before we got the launch.

Now here's where we kept our boat in Richmond. When we'd go ashore we'd heist it up in these davits here, and then we'd go into town, into Oakland or some place . . .

Teiser: Your father was a good-looking man, wash't he?

Winther: Well, he was an old sea-dog.

Teiser: He doesn't look so old.

Winther: Well, he was fifty there, I guess.

[During his later years at Southampton Shoal, Ernest Winther worked on boats on the Bay for varying periods, returning to the Southampton lighthouse between jobs.]





Bay and River Recollections

- Teiser: Did you decide that you wanted to work on the water or did you just drift into it?
- Winther: Oh yes. In later years I went to navigation school in San Francisco.
- Teiser: When was that?
- Winther: That was in 1917, '18, '19, '20.
- Teiser: This was after you left Southampton Shoals?
- Winther: Yes, we left there in 1916.
- Teiser: What did you do then?
- Winther: Well, then I went to sea. And my father, he stayed in San Leandro. We'd bought a place out in San Leandro. He stayed there and I went to sea.
- Teiser: He retired, did he?
- Winther: Well, in them days there was no such a thing as retirement. You quit. Got nothing for it. There was no retirement like it is today -- you get a pension -- but you waited for the pension and it didn't show up so . . . . You never knew when it was gonna come. So a year after he left the lighthouse service, they issued pensions. That was a nice Christmas present that he got!
- Teiser: Did he get a pension then?
- Winther: No. Got nothing. Too late.\*
- Teiser: Then where did you go?
- Winther: I worked on several boats in the Bay here. First I took out my engineer's license.
- Teiser: How did you get it? What qualifications did you need?

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\*Thomas L. Winther died in 1935.



- Winther: Well, worked on different jobs until I worked long enough so they knew what I was doing, then knew how to pass an examination over there at the Custom House, and then I thought I'd go a little further and I went to navigation school.
- Teiser: What boats did you work on in the Bay?
- Winther: I worked on all the ferries. I was two years on that Sausalito-San Francisco run. I was mate on them. And then I was nine years on Don Lee's yacht. He had some beautiful big yachts, you know.
- Teiser: This was after you'd been to navigation school?
- Winther: Oh yes.
- Teiser: After you left Southampton Shoal what did you do?
- Winther: I worked for a freight line that brought all the provisions, everything, over to Richmond from San Francisco. There was no trucks in them days. No transportation to bring anything like that into Richmond. It all went by boat. So I worked on that line for the Richmond Navigation Company. And then I worked on freight up in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers.
- Teiser: What line was that?
- Winther: Erikson Transportation Company. We hauled up -- oh, we were running night and day with freight. Whatever they could get to carry, you know. I was engineer on that job.
- Teiser: Were they big ships?
- Winther: Well -- for what they had in them days -- fairly good-sized. They were three or four-hundred ton.
- Teiser: What kind of freight?
- Winther: Everything! Lumber, hay, potatoes -- anything that come along that the farmers had to offer, you know -- wanted it shipped here and there.



Teiser: They weren't barges, though?

Winther: No, it wasn't towing then. There was no power in them days. Everything was sail, and there was a few boats that had money enough to buy an engine and stick it in the hull to help out the wind. That was long before the real power showed up around here.

Teiser: This goes back again . . . I think you said you remembered the Whitehall boats?

Winther: The Whitehall -- Tom Crowley and the [Henry C.] Petersen launch company went out to the ships to get orders you know for provisions. I counted where the San Francisco Bay Bridge is now, all in that area (today they call that Naval Anchorage). I counted fifty-six sailing vessels anchored right there in one group. And that's a mere trifle, from what used to anchor there.

Teiser: And the Whitehall boats went around to them?

Winther: They went around, yes. Took some of the crew members ashore. Most of that was pulling. That's before any gas engine come out.

Teiser: The whitehall boats were pulled?

Winther: Yes. You would have to tow. That was real work in them days.

Teiser: What year was it that you counted those ships out there?

Winther: Oh, it must have been 1906, '07, or '08.

Teiser: Those were the years when the Alaska . . .

Winther: . . . Packers used to come here -- yeah. "Course there's still a long, long story -- I'm leaving an awful lot out yet, you know, but -- you can go on for hours . . . [Laughter]

Teiser: Well, don't leave too much out.

Winther: You can't put ten years' time in an hour's conversation; pretty hard to.



- Winther: I was at Southampton when Dewey took the first fleet around the world. That was the Atlantic Fleet. He come around here and he met the Pacific Fleet. Well, the Pacific Fleet was sent up and anchored parallel with the Southampton Shoal, just a little ways off the lighthouse, about six or eight cruisers -- the largest ship we had in them days was cruisers -- what they called cruisers. They were anchored along there until Dewey came in the Golden Gate with his Atlantic Fleet. Then the Pacific Fleet went in behind 'em and all anchored down in that Naval Anchorage where the Bay Bridge is now. It was quite a sight. And those vessels in them days were painted white with a buff superstructure. It was a very pretty sight.
- Teiser: That wasn't the Great White Fleet, was it?
- Winther: The Great White Fleet.
- Teiser: Those were great days around here.
- Winther: Oh yes. The only amusement people had then was to go down and see something like that. But today, they jump in automobiles and disappear, go some place else. There was very few automobiles then, very few.
- Teiser: When you were at Southampton Shoal or at the Farallones, did you ever have anything to do with wrecks?
- Winther: At Point Bonita we saw several wrecks. That's a graveyard out there, you know, that's a treacherous channel, that bar, what they call the Potato Patch. You know where it breaks?
- Teiser: You had no way to report them, though, did you?
- Winther: Well, we didn't have to report them -- they were seen by quite a few. 'Specially on the San Francisco side. 'Cause in them days pollution was unheard of. The water was as clear as crystal -- beautiful color. And it's a sad sight to see the Bay the way it is today from what it was then. It'll take many years before they -- if they try real hard -- many years before it gets back anywheres near the condition it was in the early 1900's.





- Teiser: When you were working on the Bay and up the rivers, did you enjoy that work?
- Winther: Oh yes, the traffic wasn't very heavy and the scenic country up there was beautiful! All the rivers, for miles -- there was trees on both banks draping into the river. Now, of course the Army Engineers had to cut quite a few down and destroy the landscape, although they've made better channels for shipping. But everything then was natural, and you can't beat the picture of a natural scenery.
- Teiser: What were your duties on those boats?
- Winther: Well, I went to work for the Sacramento district, doing a lot of towing, dredging . . .
- Teiser: Oh, after Erickson?
- Winther: Yeah. 1917 I went up there to work for the Army Engineers, up the Sacramento River. Our station was at Rio Vista.
- Teiser: And what did you do?
- Winther: I was sent up there as engineer on a tug.
- Teiser: So by then you were an engineer?
- Winther: Oh yes. After a while I took command of it and did all the towing up there.
- Teiser: You went to work there in 1917 and then to work where?
- Winther: That freight line; '18, I guess, I was on that. Erikson Transportation Company.\* The skipper -- his name was Neilson -- he had a half interest in it.
- Teiser: And that was in 1918, after you'd gone to work first for the Army Engineers?

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\*Erikson Navigation Company.



Yachts and the Sausalito Ferry

- Winther: Yeah. Then I quit, and then I went on different ships including Don Lee's yacht, and jumped around from one place to the other. 'Course in 1925 or '26, some place along in there, I went to navigation school.
- Teiser: That was after or before you were on Don Lee's yacht?
- Winther: From '20 to '27 I was on Don Lee's yacht.
- Teiser: How'd you happen to get in touch with him?
- Winther: An ad in the paper. He was looking for an engineer. So I answered the ad, and after interviewing forty applicants . . .
- Teiser: Forty, my word! He chose you! What was the name of the yacht?
- Winther: The first one was Gloriana and the second one was Invader.
- Teiser: And you were engineer?
- Winther: I was engineer on that for a length of time. Of course the story goes on and on and on, you know. After I started working for the Army Engineers here then I got to be skipper of their survey boat.
- Teiser: Will you tell a little about your years as engineer on Don Lee's yachts?
- Winther: Here it is under full sail.
- Teiser: Which one is this?
- Winther: That's the Invader. 135-foot. Isn't that a beautiful ship?
- Teiser: Was San Francisco its home port?
- Winther: Yes. And here it's being outfitted down in Long Beach -- Craig shipyard in Long Beach. There we are down there getting fitted out. Here's some of the crew that worked on the outfitting.



Teiser: How large a crew did you have?

Winther: Seventeen men. And here's three officers.

Teiser: Who was captain?

Winther: Fellow by the name of Neilson. Miller -- Karl Miller was the mate. That's myself. Here's the mate and myself having a siesta on the deck.

Teiser: Looks like a pleasant life.

Winther: Oh, dandy!

Teiser: Did you have to work hard too, sometimes?

Winther: Well, just the night -- long hours, that's all. Physically, no.

And that's the -- we're in the shipyard, Union Iron Works in San Francisco. Drydock.

Teiser: Where was the yacht built?

Winther: It was built as a racer on the East coast. Here's some of the crew. Here's the stern view of it in drydock.

Teiser: Is this before you were married?

Winther: Yes. There's the mate and myself on the stern. 'Course I like to take pictures.

Teiser: Would you just stand ready, and whenever Mr. Lee wanted to go anywhere, why off you went?

Winther: That's it.

Teiser: What sort of places did you go?

Winther: Oh, we went all over. We had a lot of hard luck too, lots of times. We were going down to the South Seas one time and some trouble come up and we couldn't make it. And we were going to Alaska, trouble come up.

Teiser: What kind of trouble?



Winther: Well, some of this was his business trouble. He was an agent -- Cadillac agent for the State of California. Then he'd get a call, he'd have to come back. And then one time we got in a storm off the coast -- through the ignorance of the captain -- he didn't shorten the sail, and, gee! The whole rigging came down. Here it is laying at anchor at Catalina. Here's the crew at anchor down there.

Teiser: It had auxiliary motors, of course?

Winther: Oh yeah! We had our own ice machine. Generating plants, like all engine rooms have.

Teiser: Who's that, looking through the glasses?

Winther: That's Don Lee's little girl. And here we are in dry dock again.

Teiser: Awfully good pictures.

Winther: That's me posing there.

Teiser: Snappy uniform too!

Winther: And here's the family of Don Lee. That's Mr. Lee there and that's his wife, that's his secretary, that's his different friends he had. We used to take out all the Hollywood personnel in them days. All the movie actors and actresses. All the stars, on different trips. I wanted to show you. Here's a shark. Now this is Monterey. They used to catch sharks down there and process them, and I just wanted to show you the size.

Teiser: What did they process 'em for?

Winther: Fertilizer and I guess cat feed and so forth. See the size of them? Look at this monster. That's a flat-bed truck and look at where he is.

Teiser: Only half on it [laughter]! How long do you think that shark is?

Winther: Oh, that shark there was forty or fifty feet.

Teiser: When were you in Monterey?





- Winther: We went down there with this [Army] boat when we were surveying -- doing a lot of work down there.
- Teiser: You left Don Lee . . .
- Winther: 1927 I think it was, wasn't it? So then I went skipper for a fellow name of [Hart] weaver whose father [Chester Weaver] had the agency for the Studebaker. I went skipper on his yacht Frivilla here.\* And after that I went on the ferries over on the Sausalito ferry run, in those Depression days.
- Teiser: What did you say the name of the line was?
- Winther: Northwestern Pacific.
- Teiser: Where did it dock in San Francisco?
- Winther: Well, the automobile ferry docked at the foot of Hyde Street or the Ferry Building, and all the passengers went to the Ferry Building. Then they had the Hyde Street fun -- they ran over to Berkeley -- that long wharf they had in Berkeley at the foot of University Avenue. In the old days there used to be a real large fleet of ferry boats on the Bay here at one time.
- Teiser: The Sausalito ferry was a little different, wasn't it? Didn't everybody say that it was more interesting?
- Winther: Well, you could say that. Of course the people that went on the S.P. line from Oakland to San Francisco were from all over the country. They [the people on the Sausalito ferry] were more like commuters that established themselves in Marin County. And you seen them same faces everyday. Whereas on that other ferry there'd be new faces every day.
- Teiser: Didn't a lot of people go over on Sundays too from San Francisco to Marin County to hike and . . .
- Winther: Oh, that was great! Thousands of people took the

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\*Ernest Winther also worked at other jobs during times when the Frivilla was laid up.



Winther: ferries that went over there and roamed around. Of course it wasn't congested with automobiles then. They had the whole country to themselves. The few that could afford it and had automobiles, they just went a little further, you know, and went hiking, but a lot of people did a lot of hiking over there. And you were safe. You could come back late at night and be safe.

Teiser: You had been to navigation school by then?

Winther: That was before that.

Teiser: What navigation school did you go to?

Winther: One in San Francisco on Sansome Street, Taylor and Taylor. Two brothers operated Taylor's navigation school.

Teiser: How long did you study?

Winther: Off and on I guess two years. I went there long enough til I got these two tickets -- so . . .

Teiser: Tickets?

Winther: Well, it was licenses. One for Master, and the other for Chief Engineer. So after I got them then I was pretty well independent, so then I got married. I was going to take up flying. So I went up to Bill Royal's school in Alameda. He operated an aviation school where the Alameda Naval Air Station is today. So we went up and did all kinds of stunts up in the air, looped-the-loop, barrel-rolling, everything you could think of, so the following week I was going to take lessons with 'em, but I got married the following week.

Teiser: [Laughter] That stopped that?

Winther: [Emphatic] That stopped that.

Teiser: What was your wife's maiden name?

Winther: Alice Brochier. And her father had a laundry business down in West Oakland. And that's the parents [picture] up there, her mother and father.



Teiser: What year was it that you were married?

Winther: '29.

Teiser: Was this after the crash?

Winther: No, during the crash.

Teiser: Well, you were brave.

Winther: We made out fine -- made out very good. I was never out of a job. So it didn't scare me to much.

Teiser: It was then you went to work on the ferry boats?

Winther: Ferry boats and then the Army Engineers. I was in the marine engine business at 111 Mission Street for a couple of years off and on during that Depression [in partnership with William Sylva], and it was so bad we couldn't maintain it; so then I worked for the Army Engineers.

Teiser: What year did you start to work for the Army Engineers?

Winther: That was late in '29. That's in San Francisco. In 1917 I started with the Engineers up the Sacramento River. So in the later years I went back with the San Francisco office. And I was with them for thirty years.

### The Farallones in the 1906 Earthquake

Teiser: Let's start today, if we may, with your recollections of the 1906 earthquake at the Farallones.

Winther: That's easy enough. That happened so fast there's not much to say about that other than that at five o'clock that morning when that earthquake came along it took everybody by surprise. After all the families got up and around they conversed with one another about what they thought about a tidal wave happening. And all this time, we didn't know a thing about San Francisco.



Teiser: You just thought you had a local shock?

Winther: That's it. See, there was no communication at all between the mainland and Farallones at that time. So we went around and looked at the local damage out there which consisted of hundreds of tons of rock falling down, slides here and there you know, because the island consists of a mass of rotten granite -- very rotten granite. So that night we saw a big reflection to the east, and we surmised that it was a big fire around San Francisco somewhere; and the light was so intense that we could read fine print from that light at that thirty mile distance. And of course, the following night the same thing, until the third night the same thing, but then it started to dwindle. The light started to dim out. I guess they had the fire under control. But all this time we didn't know what was happening until a boat finally came out that week with some provisions, being as the Farallon Islands was in the County of San Francisco, and they were distributing food around San Francisco to the families that got burnt out. They also brought food out to us and that's when we first heard about the severeness of this earthquake and that San Francisco practically got burnt out.

Teiser: What damage was done on the island to the structures?

Winther: No damage at all. None to the fog signal or the house or the rain shed, or the light. It shook pretty violently, but my father happened to be up in the tower; that was his watch that same night. See, they have a man on watch up in the tower on top of the hill . . .

Teiser: Where the light was?

Winther: Yes. No damage was done to that, but it felt like the light was going over the side of the hill, down the cliff. Outside of a few little cracks, but I don't call that severe damage.

Teiser: Had everybody there experienced earthquakes before so they knew enough about them to . . .

Winther: No, not that we could find out. No, earthquakes didn't happen to often, and the average length of time a keeper stays there is about three or five years. So you get a new hand there all the time, so you never find that out.





Teiser: Was there any cleaning up of the slide areas, or was that not necessary?

Winther: Not necessary -- it was all out in the wild, and so we just looked at it as a new landscape!

Teiser: My word! A real change in the landscape.

Winther: Oh yes. Of course, that happens everywhere you know. That happens on the mainland here -- slides all over, and that changes the surface of the earth in a generation.

### The Changing World Around and in the Bay

Teiser: When I was talking to Mr. Harold Gilliam, he said he wondered when the groves of trees along the East Bay hills, that start in Berkeley and come all the way down here, were planted. Do you by any chance know?

Winther: That's easy enough to find out because there was quite a fad here one time -- all farmers, anybody that had a piece of land, to plant Australian eucalyptus trees. It was done for three purposes: for furniture, and for windbreak and firewood. On top of the hills of Berkeley there's still big groves of eucalyptus trees up there, and there used to be a firm that would get that certain type of eucalyptus for furniture purposes. But that went out of the picture too.

Teiser: What firm was that, do you remember?

Winther: No, I don't remember the firm.

Teiser: This was within your recollection?

Winther: Yes. We could see that when I was at Southampton lighthouse. We had a good view of that right up there. Every once in a while they cut out an acre or two of trees, and that went for furniture. Why they planted them on top of the Berkeley hills I



- Winther: don't know. When they got the land, must have been cheap then. But the full length of the state of California there's groves of eucalyptus trees -- very large groves. And between San Francisco and Los Angeles there's some monstrous big groves. But what they use them for nowadays is most anything -- mostly firewood.
- Teiser: There are fewer and fewer of them.
- Winther: Are they eliminating them?
- Teiser: Well, every time they build a road or something. They don't replant eucalyptus now, do they?
- Winther: No. No. It's a tree that will ruin the soil. It's so full of oil that it ruins the soil, but it's only good if they find some use for eucalyptus.
- Teiser: From the Southampton lighthouse out there you could see all around?
- Winther: Well, you got a 360 degree view. And one winter, it was 1907 or '08, the full perimeter of the Bay was covered with snow down to the water line. Angel Island was white, Berkeley was white, Richmond, San Francisco, Marin County was snow white down to the water line. We had a nice little snow storm which lasted about three days. And that's quite a while ago, and there hasn't been any that way since.
- Teiser: What time of year was it?
- Winther: I don't recollect exactly what time of the winter it was, but it was in the early part of the winter. That's when we get our snows.
- Teiser: Was it pretty chilly out at the lighthouse?
- Winther: We didn't notice it because every day it was more or less chilly -- you're out in the open, and there's no windbreak. You take wind right off the water, it's not very warm.
- Teiser: You were talking about the things that you caught in the Bay right there. You said a kind of crab . . .



Winther: Well, that's our native crab we caught there, and there was a nice local fish called rock cod. You seldom ever get 'em over 12 inches long, but they're sweet as sugar. And of course nowadays it's eliminated through pollution.

Teiser: What else did you catch out there -- bass?

Winther: Very seldom. We never went for bass -- you have to really go for bass to get bass, but plenty of those sharks you've seen in the photographs in the month of July and August; we caught that type of shark out there. Plenty of 'em [smaller than] that largest one I caught -- 18 feet long. Outside of that there wasn't very much, but there used to be enormous flocks of ducks drift down with the ebb tide. All kinds of ducks. And they used San Pablo Bay, and this San Francisco Bay was their refuge for resting. Poor feeding grounds for them, but they rested most of the time. The flocks were there by millions of ducks.

Teiser: What time of year?

Winther: In duck season -- winter time.

Teiser: Did you shoot ducks then? Was it feasible?

Winther: Yes, I could get a few from the lighthouse, but you had to watch. If the tide was too strong, by the time you'd lower a boat and get out and pick up your dead duck, you were a good distance away from the lighthouse, and of course you have to pull back to the lighthouse against that tide. So it was a little work. I wasn't too anxious to shoot any ducks off of there.

Teiser: What kind of ducks? Unusual varieties?

Winther: No, the common kind you get around here -- mallards and canvasbacks, sprigs, widgeons, and so forth.

Teiser: What other kinds of birds were there in the Bay there?

Winther: The same as you see today. The cormorants; 'course seagulls are always here.



- Teiser: One of the things we were wondering about was the change in the currents in the Bay. Have they, within your observation, changed much?
- Winther: The only time they've changed is through velocity. We don't get the certain tides, the velocity of 'em, at certain places, like we used to -- they're there, the same, the tide is there, the current is there, but the velocity is lessened in some places.
- Teiser: What do you think accounts for that?
- Winther: Well, these fills around divert the different currents -- like, for instance, when they put Treasure Island in there. That changed the tidal current immensely in some areas, also lessened it. Now, on the east side of Treasure Island the current is more severe. 'Course the tides are the same, but the currents change.
- Teiser: Mr. Gilliam said that he had always wondered how far out into the ocean through the Golden Gate these big flows of muddy water go -- you know, when you see the mud come down from the Delta.
- Winther: Well this time of the year when we get a big freshet, like for instance now, there'll be a big freshet, and it'll be more prominent in the month of April and May than it is now, but they come down, discolored of course. And it's according to the velocity of the tide how far out to sea it'll take this muddy water. And it'll go out past the light ship, which is nine miles out, and by the time it gets pretty well out there the current changes again -- in six or eight hours, you know, it don't go too far -- and of course you've got the full length of the Bay to get these muddy tributaries that run into the Bay, which consist mainly of silt. And that silt is distributing itself around on the perimeter of the Bay and filling in where it once was deep water, clear and deep -- it's now shallow and muddy.

So as the fresh water comes down from the rivers, enters into the Bay, an enormous lot of it if we get a big rain, it stays around a while, and that's more of a chocolate color.

- Teiser: Has the Potato Patch been filling?





- Winther: No, it can't fill very well because the undertow, when it gets a good storm, or a heavy sea rolls over that, it doesn't let that silt compact. And of course it drifts -- there's always a current running and whatever way the current goes the silt has to go, but rough weather will lift it off of the bottom, won't let it settle -- specially out there.
- Teiser: I always wondered whether gold from all the years of mining was out in the Potato Patch there, but I guess no [laughter] . . .
- Winther: Well, yes. You can say that. There is.
- Teiser: You think there is? There's some caught out there still? It would be heavier . . .
- Winther: Well naturally, you gotta give it time, though. Nature takes care of that through generations. Now that gold has been travelling down the Feather River and Sacramento River for generations, and it distributes itself around, but of course it's beyond the ability of man to pick it up or find a way of recovering it. You can find gold on the beaches up the coast. There used to be quite a fad. The natives of Crescent City used to go down to their own beach up there and in the black sand take out gold, but it was an awful hard job and expensive. They had to use quicksilver in order to recover it. It got too expensive so they give it up. The price of gold doesn't warrant it.
- Teiser: The Bay perimeter, you say, has filled in. Has it changed markedly from when you first knew it?
- Winther: It's changed drastically from the first time I got interested in it, because all these tributaries that run into the Bay bring silt. Now you can take any part of the Bay, any part -- put your finger on any part of the shoreline, and that used to be deep water; like the old Golden Gate ferry that run into University Avenue in Berkeley? That used to be deep water out there. It's quite a few acres of mud flats which filled in anywheres from one to ten feet. It's filling in every winter now.



Teiser: From the water, not filled in by being dumped on?

Winther: No-no-no. This is a natural fill. Silt fills itself in. There used to be a wharf up in Vallejo where lumber schooners used to be on the inside of the wharf, inside from the channel, they used to unload lumber. Now some of those boats drew anywhere from 15 to 20 feet of water when they were loaded. Today you can't get a duck boat in there. It's bone dry at low water, right where these [boats came in]. That's a sample of how the silt is forming -- not done by the hand of man; that's all natural silt filled in. And the Army Engineers has dredges running up and down that channel to keep it deep.

Teiser: Well, what about the shallow waters of the Bay? For instance, weren't there shallows near where Dumbarton Bridge is now? And all through the southern part there?

Winther: Yeah. There's mud flats here, shoaling up. But the channel -- the currents maintain the channel although they're a little narrower than they used to be, but they're maintaining the natural depth of the channel very constant.

Teiser: Where were the oyster beds down there?

Winther: The oyster beds were mostly on the San Mateo side of the Bay. Of course they were planted. A type of oyster was planted there. But the natural oyster was gone years ago. That was a small California oyster. . .

Teiser: Do you remember those?

Winther: No. I wasn't down that way at that time.

Teiser: But did you know of them when you were young?

Winther: Oh yes! Jack London's favorite oyster grounds.

Teiser: And that was while they were still the native oysters?



- Winther: Natives and these planted -- 'course the planted oysters were a little larger. That was operated by the Moraghan Oyster Company.
- Teiser: Was that the only oyster company operating on the Bay?
- Winther: Yes. Now the natural silts coming into the Bay through civilization and other sources filled in these oysters and killed 'em off.

#### Water Pollution and Flotsam

- Winther: That was the start of pollution.
- Teiser: When was that, about?
- Winther: Oh, that was in the early 'teens up to -- they were there after the earthquake -- still oysters there then.
- Teiser: 1907-08?
- Winther: Yeah. That's about the time they start to disappear.
- Teiser: Were they gone by the First World War?
- Winther: Oh yes, yes.
- Teiser: When did man-made fill and pollution start affecting the Bay?
- Winther: They've been creeping up gradually for a good number of years, but as the population got dense around here, why of course that increased. As the cities grew, they had to have a place to dump their garbage, and the easiest place was out into the Bay. Then oil companies start to come around; then boats start to burn oil instead of coal and that was just before the gasoline engine or diesel engine ever arrived. Then oil pollutions start to come on the surface and drift around. When the oil took over the coal. So you will see one follows the other, and of course no good ever arrives on any of those things outside of the convenience.



- Teiser: Sewage -- I suppose raw sewage was dumped in the Bay all the time, early.
- Winther: Oh, that's from the time the pilgrims first came here!
- Teiser: But I guess if there aren't many people it doesn't have any effect upon it. Disperses quickly . . .
- Winther: No. Of course in them days there was no such a thing as detergent. A little weak, soapy water into the Bay wasn't noticeable. Like the detergents of today are going in by a million gallons a day. That never dissipates.
- Teiser: What was there in the Bay besides oysters there that isn't now, then?
- Winther: Anything. Just mention it! There was oysters, crabs, shrimp, plenty of nice fish -- a great variety of fish. In the Oakland Estuary you'd get striped bass, sturgeon, flounders, anything like that was plentiful. Just try and get one today -- of any kind.
- Teiser: Little smelts?
- Winther: Shiners and smelts are more like a sewer fish. They hang around sewers. So you'll always have them. Some fish can take it, but the good fish, they like the good, clean, pure salt water.
- Teiser: You said that on some days when it was stormy, the fishing boats would stay inside the Bay . . .
- Winther: Oh, they couldn't get out . . .
- Teiser: What would they catch in the Bay then, all of these things?
- Winther: There'd be sea bass, bass, and -- in different places where they'd choose to fish -- there wouldn't be an awful lot, but enough to hold 'em over for a day or two, until the weather moderates outside. See, all their fishing grounds was outside, and this area in the Bay was only emergency, so they didn't get too many.





Teiser: Salmon, too, I suppose?

Winther: Yes. Salmon was all the way from here to Sacramento. 'Course those was all caught in nets.

Teiser: Yes, there was a big salmon industry in the Sacramento River . . .

Winther: Oh, it was -- enormous.

Teiser: When you were with the Army Engineers then, beginning in late in 1929, part of your job was to go around and inspect garbage dumps?

Winther: Yes. To find the source of this pollution, specially oil pollution.

Teiser: Why? How did that happen to be part of your duties?

Winther: It's part of the Engineers' duties to keep the Bay in order. Any wharf to be built or any construction of any kind, they had to go to the Army Engineers for a permit to do this.

Teiser: So you had to actually make inspections of fills?

Winther: Inspection of fills and pollution, oil pipe leaks, anything that would harm the Bay in any way.

Teiser: How did you detect them?

Winther: By search. Traces, you know. You'd get a trace of something and you'd have to follow that up. Like there was in the Oakland Estuary here -- there was some of these big apartment houses used to burn bunker oil (that's "crude oil") in their heating plant. And when that oil truck comes and fills their tank it would overflow. There was only one place for it to go and that's into the sewer system. Well, their sewer system led out into the Oakland Estuary. When you see a bunch of black crude oil coming out of the storm sewers down there you trace that up -- trace the storm sewer up to wherever it leads to and then through suspicion you go and inquire about it. That's the way we find some of them. Not always. That takes time.



Teiser: Did you have some surveillance over dumping?

Winther: Well, if they violated any of the rules, yes. Anything that would float: lumber, stumps of trees, anything that would float and hinder shipping, navigation. Like tires. All tires don't sink. If there's a little pocket of air in there, the tire will float. And that's one of the worst things any ship's propeller appears to hit. Take the propeller right off or bend the shafts, according to the size of the vessel. Of course there was a big fine on it throwing material in the Bay], but a lot of 'em do this at night time when it's not detected so easy.

Teiser: What kind of agencies or people would do that? You mean just individuals tossing out stuff?

Winther: They go overboard from ships, or they'll be pushed over from these various dumps. There's quite a few dumps around the perimeter of the Bay. And then they'd push it out so far with no intention of letting it float around, but high tide'll come in and take it away from 'em. Like there was one ship -- the hull of the ship, in skeleton form, of course, was laying down by Candlestick Point. And one high tide with an offshore wind took this one night out into the Bay, and through the currents it drifted through the ferry boat passage and found itself the next morning on the west side of Treasure Island. It was a monster. It was about 200 feet long, and the ribs were sticking up like a porcupine. If a ferry boat hit that it would poke a hole in her and of course you'd have a disaster right then. But I was sent out, and I towed it up over to Richmond where it was destroyed.

Teiser: Was it the hull of a wrecked ship?

Winther: The hull of a sailing ship -- a wooden hull. That shoreline down there used to be a graveyard for ships that were deliberately pushed up there to get 'em out of the way, and very few was ever tied or anchored, or secured to the shore. And a high tide would float 'em, and they'd be high enough to be dried out, so they'd have buoyancies for floating, and that's what would happen there. So that was one of the menaces of navigation on the Bay.



Teiser: What were some of the others?

Winther: Big logs, drifting around.

Teiser: They'd get loose from log rafts, or . . .

Winther: It was hard to say where they come from. They just show up and you'll wonder, where the deuce did this come from? No way of knowing. No tell-tale on the object that you're picking up. A lot of pilings would get away -- go adrift from somewhere. The currents would take it out and of course we had our own boats for cleaning up.

Teiser: The Army Engineers?

Winther: That's their responsibility to keep the Bay clean of flotsam.

Teiser: Before that how did the things get cleared away?

Winther: They drifted ashore. The Navy had an experience here. A seaplane made a landing and a piece of driftwood come right up into the plane when he was making a landing, killed the pilot, and that was the start of cleaning the Bay from driftwood.

Teiser: When was that?

Winther: That was the beginning of World War II. And they've been at it ever since.

Teiser: Did they have a naval base on Goat Island, was that it?

Winther: No, that was where the Alameda Air Station is today. Off of there. They were just building that station then. This dangerous piece of draftwood came right up through the plane. It's a freak accident -- the whole thing was a freak accident, but nevertheless, it happened. That was the start of cleaning up the Bay. And the Bay was loaded with driftwood in them days. Much more than today, because as population increased shipyard world increased, and the nuisance around the Bay increased.

Teiser: But after they started keeping it clear, they've been able to keep it clear?



- Winther: Not entirely. You can go out there one day -- some different days of the week or the month and you never find a stick, but suddenly a lot of it shows up in the drift, and some of these drifts could be anywhere from a 100 feet to a mile long. Full of wood. You wonder where it comes from. Course high tide with a certain type of wind will take it off the shoreline and bring it out in the Bay and it'll drift again, see? Just like this picture on the Farallones I showed you -- those spars that were washed 'way up.\*
- Teiser: Were there other types of menaces to navigation in the Bay besides drifting boats and wood?
- Winther: Well, the only other type of menace was the natural fog, and we had a lot of traffic in them days, and when you find your way with a lot of traffic in a fog without an accident, you're doing pretty good. 'Course there've been a lot of wrecks, you know, around Alcatraz Island, ferry boats have been hit and sunk, and out at the bar. Ships have run ashore. . .
- Teiser: Do you remember the wreck of the Rio de Janeiro?
- Winther: That's the 1900s [1901]. I was at Point Bonita. I just went to Point Bonita a year before that happened. And of course I knew a wrecker -- he was in the wrecking business in them days -- he had located it and tied a buoy to it, but the currents out there are so severe, when he was going to send a diver down to it, the ship had slipped off its position and disappeared with buoy and all, so they never had the chance to find it since.
- Teiser: What was his name? Do you remember it?
- Winther: We used to call him, "Whitelaw, the Wrecker!" That's what he was.\*\*

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\*Photograph 14

\*\*Thomas P. H. Whitelaw of the Whitelaw Wrecking Company.





Teiser: What did he do? Deal in salvaged equipment?

Winther: That's right. Anything that sunk in the Bay, he worked on that. Tried to salvage it; save it or, wreck it, or take out what they could.

A couple of months after that Rio de Janeiro went down the cabin -- a part of the cabin of the ship -- drifted ashore at Lime Point lighthouse. And they went down to it at low tide and went into it and there was a washbasin in this -- evidently it was an occupied cabin -- by passengers -- there was some jewelry laying in the bottom of this washbasin. What they did to it I don't know. Also, an engine of some vessel -- shows you the severeness of these currents -- an engine of some vessel washed up there on the beach.

Teiser: Up where?

Winther: Lime Point lighthouse. Now, engines don't float. But the current pushed it up on the beach from somewhere, and that's deep water there. Now just imagine the strength of the currents. But it didn't stay there long. The next tide or two it disappeared again. But you could see it at low tide -- you could see it laying there.

Remember that tanker that went ashore by the Cliff House?

Teiser: No, what was that?

Winther: Between Baker's Beach and the Cliff House is where that tanker went ashore.

Teiser: Near Mile Rock lighthouse, oh yes.

Winther: 'Twenty-nine, 'thirty or 'thirty-one she ran ashore there.

Teiser: How'd they ever get it off?

Winther: Didn't get off. She was a total loss. She ran up so hard that those rocks punctured her bottom and anchored herself there.



Teiser: What happened finally?

Winther: The water disintegrated it. Disappeared.

Teiser: How long did it take it to disappear?

Winther: Oh I think a little over a year. Don't take long when that salt water and those big breakers start pounding you. They don't last very long.

Teiser: Were they able to get on the ship and salvage anything?

Winther: Oh yeah, they salvaged what they could.

Beaches, Shores and Shrimp Beds

Teiser: Someone said there was a flume running along Baker's Beach. Do you remember that? A water flume.

Winther: No. There was never a flume around here.

Teiser: Maybe I'm wrong about it being Baker's Beach.

Winther: I think you are.

Teiser: From Point Lobos Creek?

Winther: Down and out that way, but that was the main water supply for the Presidio. They had a beautiful creek running there; it's still there. . . but they don't use it for water supply any more.

Teiser: Where's Baker's Beach? I've got it mixed up with something else.

Winther: Well, there's a Baker's Beach between Fort Point and the Cliff House.

Teiser: Has that beach itself changed since you've know it?

Winther: No, it remains the same. The natural currents take care of that.



Teiser: Are there any beaches that have changed much?

Winther: No, they're pretty well established. Of course that beach up by the Cliff House, that comes and goes. A certain part of it'll wash out and wash back. Just like the Farallon Islands. There's one little beach there that consisted of pulverized shell, no sand -- everything is pulverized shell out there. And a certain time of the year, and you can't find it anywhere, although at a certain time of the year you can look in that water ten or twenty feet deep, it's so clear. And you can't see a sign of this shell. And that'll stay out for a month or two, and it'll come back, and all this transaction happens in the night! Like you go down there at sundown one day, and here's a beautiful beach. The next morning you go down there and there's no beach. Then there's a certain time of the year the currents bring that all back again -- wherever they take it -- 'way out from the island. You talk about mysteries of Nature -- there's one study -- a good study there. If anybody could fathom that one they got to go some. And you go down there in the daylight and there won't be any sand, the next morning it's all back beautiful. Figure that one out. That happens practically every year -- a certain time of the year. The currents outside change, the weather changes, so . . . . Nature has its own way of doing things.

Teiser: Speaking of changes, Mr. Gilliam said he had always wondered what the east shore line of the Bay around Berkeley looked like before they put in the freeway there.

Winther: Marshland. All beautiful marshland, full of game birds, ducks and snipe, rail, things like that, but the further south you get on the Bay, they became more dense -- plenty of wildlife then. Because they weren't molested, like up here -- too close to civilization. But the Berkeley flats were all big flats with tules and marshland, until the fills started and the industry started.



Teiser: Is it filled now further out than the marshland was?

Winther: In some places -- oh yes. Like that fill out in front of Berkeley today. It's going out further and further, it'll soon be out to the 18-foot contour, where it's around the six to ten foot now.

Teiser: Are there any marshlands left?

Winther: Oh, yes, there's quite a few down in the south part of the Bay and the perimeter of San Pablo Bay. There's quite a few. And that little bit that's left is filling in naturally with silt. So it interferes with a certain type of sea life, you know -- the breeding grounds for small life. Like in front of Richmond there are breeding grounds for crabs. And then out in different parts of the Bay there are breeding grounds for shrimp. But this pollution is taking care of that.

Teiser: The shrimp fisheries were down at China Camp, were they?

Winther: Yes. China Camp. That's down there where Islais Creek is located and Hunters Point. There'd be Chinese camps along there catering to shrimp. Had their own shrimp bed right off the Alameda Air Station, the Chinese. They were there for years and years. The Chinese operated them for many years and they would catch shrimp in what they call purse seine -- purse nets. The tide would regulate that. They'd set their nets out and the currents would see that the shrimp got into the nets all right, and then, every so often they'd lift 'em up, and that supplied the San Francisco market. And San Pablo Bay was a great shrimp grounds. Off of Point McNear. Just about three miles off Pt. McNear there was an enormous big shrimp grounds. But they're gone.

Teiser: And, in the north Bay, was there any shrimping up there?

Winther: No . . . well, there was shrimps there, but not to a great extent, not for the commercial market. But





- Winther: the run-off of Mason's distillery in Sausalito -- in the north end of Sausalito was a big distillery called Mason's Distillery -- their run-off used to run out into the Bay and it was a sort of pollution, and soon as the shrimp hit that -- got into that -- it would kill 'em. There'd be an enormous amount of dead shrimp, just kicking on the surface, going out with the ebb tide. But of course that's eliminated now, they can't do that now -- but the shrimp is gone anyway. Too late. Always too late around all these things.
- Teiser: I wonder if all the silt that fills in is due partly to the deforestation and run-off that I presume has taken place faster in our time than earlier.
- Winther: Oh, no. It's been up there during the civilizations, the industry and the population. They're so dense around here now that it builds it up much faster than it used to be.
- Teiser: The silt coming into the Bay?
- Winther: Yes, the cultivation, you know, causes a lot of that silt.
- Teiser: I guess it began with the hydraulicking, didn't it, up in the gold country?
- Winther: Oh, that was the start. The start of ruination. When you could see the bottom of the Bay and river twenty feet deep, going up to Sacramento, you had nice, clean, pure water.
- Teiser: When was that? When was the last time you could see it?
- Winther: Well the last time I seen it was in 1906, '07, '08. It wasn't very clear then -- it wasn't clear, but I drank the water where the Carquinez Bridge is today -- I drank water out of there and it was strictly fresh. And that was a constant flow; there was so much fresh water up the river constantly coming down that it kept the salt water from entering. But they restricted all that fresh water now and the salt water is creeping up as far as Sacramento.



Surveying the Bay in the 1930's

Teiser: Let's go back to when you went to the Army Engineers. What was your first job for them?

Winther: In hydro surveys. Of course I really started in 1917 with them at Rio Vista, as engineer on a tug up there. But then I came down here in '29 and started with them in hydro surveys. Kind of branched out, 'cause when you're with them you have to be able to do a little of everything. Anything that come along.

Teiser: What was your actual job?

Winther: Surveying -- hydro survey.

Teiser: You went on a boat . . .

Winther: We had our own boat for shallow-water purposes, and we kept that up there at [Pier] 3-~~2~~.

Teiser: How big a boat was that?

Winther: That was a 50-foot, and we did all the Bay surveys, channel work -- maintaining the channels. And then when we found a place that had an obstruction in it, such as shallow water, our dredges took care of that.

Hydro surveys are to find out the depths of the channels, here and there.

Teiser: And how do you record them?

Winther: That was recorded -- all hand in them days -- all hand lead, and recorded -- it was a five-man crew. Each man had a certain thing to do. We'd take angles for our location, then that was mapped in the office.

Teiser: You'd make your notes on the Bay?

Winther: That's the way.

Teiser: And then they'd put them on the map?



- Winther: Of course, it's done differently today, electronically. They have all the instruments now, it's more accurate.
- Teiser: When you say, "hand-lead" what do you mean?
- Winther: An eight-pound lead on the end of a line, marked off in 3, 5, 7, and 10, 15, 20 feet, see if it gives you the depth of the water. That's swung by a man; that's all he did, swing the lead and get the depth. Then the recorder records that depth.
- Teiser: Can he feel it hit the bottom, is that it?
- Winther: Yes. That's why it's an eight-pound lead.
- Teiser: So you can actually feel it when you're holding the line?
- Winther: Get the actual depths of it. And then there's two sextant men taking an angle so you can spot yourself on the map exactly where this is transacted.
- Teiser: What was your position in that group?
- Winther: It varied. Anything -- taking angles and recording, operating the boat. Each man had his place.
- Teiser: What kind of power did you have on that boat?
- Winther: Twin screw gas engines. Had to go into some of the damndest places with it -- shallow and deep, rough and smooth. We had annual surveys of different sections of the Bay. There's different channels that had to be covered every year besides the San Francisco bar, the main ship channel. Of course the surveys had to compete with a lot of natural things, such as fog, haze, rough weather -- they generally had to wait for an opportune time to cover certain sections.
- Teiser: When it was too foggy to get out at all, what did you do?
- Winther: Do some other work that you could do, while it's rough. Keeping up the equipment was one thing. And going to a place where there was no fog. Just to keep busy.



Teiser: Did you have an office there at Pier 3-1/2?

Winther: No, the main office was in the Custom House.

Teiser: How long did you continue?

Winther: Kept on going until the system improved, and we had to follow the improvements, electronically, and we got a sounding machine, which did very accurate work.

Teiser: About when did you do that?

Winther: It's pretty hard to say that was, maybe -- ten years later.

Teiser: About 1940? Just before World War II?

Winther: Yes. We got a sounding machine. It did work a little faster. Instead of running slow, like you have to do with a lead line, you can go full speed, and it would take care of the depths of the water and save time -- covered more territory.

Teiser: And you continued doing that through World War II?

Winther: Oh, yes. We built Army and Navy locations around here, such as Hunters Point, Alameda Naval Air Station, Treasure Island, such as that. That's the preliminary of what's there today.

Teiser: What was your function in connection with that?

Winther: The same thing. Running the boat, or operating the sounding equipment.

Now here, I just wanted to show you [looking at photograph]\* the first boat that the Army Engineers had. Here's Pier 3- $\frac{1}{2}$  where we used to lay, and there's some of the river boats that used to run up the river.

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\*Photograph 20.





Winther: This is the Richland. That's one of the barges -- the grain barges. That was the Petaluma, down here. Used to run up to Petaluma. It's a grain barge. That's the Army Engineers Survey vessel, H. L. Demeritt.

Teiser: What is "Dealer No. 4?"

Winther: It's a barge. They have a house on it for putting the cargo inside to keep it dry.

Teiser: When do you think this picture was taken?

Winther: Oh, that was taken in 1930-something. Here's [a photograph showing] one of the methods that we had for sounding. We had a small boat -- lead line sounding. We were working in the Oakland Estuary.

Teiser: Oh, you were in a rowboat?

Winther: That's shallow water. Get in between the piers.

Teiser: A lot of physical work involved?

Winther: Oh, yes.

### Building Treasure Island

Teiser: What happened when they built Treasure Island? Did you have to do some basic surveys before that?

Winther: All of it. We covered the whole entire area, plus, on Treasure Island, and from that survey they determined the size of the island they wanted to build. They determined the yardage required to build that entire island. They had as much as fifteen dredges on that job, and that material came from different locations of the Bay -- like Knox Shoals, that's on the west side of Angel Island, furnished a lot of the materials. And then Presidio Shoals which consisted of fine gravel and shell, that supplied quite a bit of the material for Treasure Island.



Teiser: So the building of Treasure Island would have changed the currents not only by what was added there but in places where it was taken away?

Winther: Divert the currents in different directions.

Teiser: Did almost all of the fill come from inside the Bay?

Winther: All of it. All came from the bottom of the Bay, here and there.

Teiser: Shallow bottom?

Winther: Shoals, whatever the depth was; there was three shoals furnished a lot of material for that. That was Knox Shoal, Presidio Shoals and Alcatraz Shoals. Then they had a borrow pit off on the east side of the island, off of Berkeley, which produced some very fine material for fill.

Teiser: The east side of Goat Island?

Winther: Yes. Between Goat Island and Berkeley. In there there was good material taken out of that to supply it, more of a sand.

Teiser: Was it above water?

Winther: No, no. All under water.

Teiser: This borrow pit was under water?

Winther: It was from 15 to 50 feet.

Teiser: I see.

Winther: We had different types of dredges bring that up and transport it over there. Just like the Bay Bridge toll road, that road that runs to the toll gate? All that's from the bottom of the Bay -- all of that Bay Bridge fill on the Oakland side is from the bottom of the Bay.

Teiser: Where was that taken from?

Winther: Taken off of where the outer harbor is today --



Winther: Oakland outer harbor, in that area between there and Goat Island. That's all sand, and was wonderful for this.

Teiser: Really the Bay has been changed!

Winther: It changed a lot. It supplied a lot of good material for different jobs, different construction jobs; it's also been hurt by other different jobs coming to the perimeter of the Bay, by these fills, by filling here and there and of course it's [decreased] the size of the Bay to a great extent.

Teiser: So far as the actual construction of Treasure Island is concerned, did that have any harmful results? The existence of it there?

Winther: No, only the matter of changing the current, that's all. And that didn't to any extent harm anything. It increased the velocity of the current on the east side of the island a great deal. It narrowed up the channel there so that that same volume of water has to get out.

Here's a picture of a tug -- the date is on here, '27 -- the Army Engineers had, and that came down from the Columbia River to do work here and I run that boat for the duration of the construction of the Fair [the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island.]

Teiser: This is called . . .

Winther: The tug Adams. There's some of the barges, the old-time barges which now are all extinct. You see how they used to carry the freight around here then. Put tarpaulins on some of 'em that didn't have houses.

Teiser: These were just plain barges without any power of their own?

Winther: That's it. They were towed around by the tugs that handled 'em.

And here's one of the dredges -- the Multnomah



Winther: down from Portland -- that helped build Treasure Island.

Teiser: That carried the material you told about --

Winther: Pumped it up and spread it out all over the area.

Teiser: Where was it working here, do you think?

Winther: In that particular picture? That was between the island and Berkeley. That was on the east side of the island.

Teiser: What's this behind there?

Winther: That's pipeline. See that's this pipeline here that they pump the material through, and deposit it.

Teiser: You mean they laid a pipeline to where they were taking the material from and pumped it through . . .

Winther: That's what you call a floating pipeline; that pipe is 30 inches in diameter.

Teiser: Where were they pumping it from then?

Winther: The bottom of the Bay. Monstrous big pumps, push that along.

Teiser: Just in the form of mud? I should think it would be so gooey when you got it on the island that it wouldn't stock.

Winther: A certain percentage of water had to go with it to carry it. That's mostly all sand.

Now here's a picture from Treasure Island looking at Alcatraz out through the Golden Gate, when they were building that bridge at the time. And here's what they call an "elbow" in the pipeline. That's a turn.

Teiser: Is that a pumping station at the turn?

Winther: No, that's just an elbow -- gives the pipe a different lead.





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Teiser: That's all on floats.

Winther: Of course we had to take care of those dredges. And here I am: Now that's a steam dredge, and in order to keep 'em going we had what they call a big water barge, and it was my job to take that water barge over to Oakland and fill it and tow it back out to 'em again. And here, alongside of that water barge is that tug. That's a type of pulling. You see, you do anything that comes along, and you can't tell what type of pulling had to be done.

And here's part of the crew of that tug Adams. That's me over there on the left.

And on the west side -- I told you about this I believe -- that came from Candlestick Point in the night and drifted ashore on Treasure Island. Well this is the wreck here, and I'm pulling it off with the Adams.

Teiser: Oh, this was one of the ships that got loose?

Winther: Uh huh. And drifted across the ferry lanes, and found itself on the west side of the island, stuck on the side of the rock wall. It was a menace to navigation. It's a wonder some of these ferry boats didn't hit it. Just a miracle that they didn't hit it.

We had an accident with this tug here, the Adams, and poked a big hole in the side of it. There's the hole in the side of it. She almost sunk out there on us. They're in drydock here fixing it.

Teiser: How'd you do that?

Winther: Oh, a ferryboat -- we had what they call wooden fenders, and a ferryboat came by pretty close to us, and they threw quite a swell and of course the barge and the tug came together and this wooden fender went through the hull of the tug. So we had to hurry up and get on the dry dock and get patched up.

Teiser: Did you pump all the way to it?



Winther: Oh, yeah. This boat was equipped with all kinds of salvage gear aboard, so we saved ourselves with our own gear. [Laughter]

Teiser: All kinds of dangers on the Bay, aren't there?

Winther: Obstacles here and there all of the time.

Teiser: Were you a good swimmer?

Winther: No. [Both laugh] If I was long winded, it'd be all right. But when you're short-winded, you can't swim. We don't think of that when we're working on the water.

Teiser: Did you ever fall in?

Winther: Oh yeah! Sure.

Teiser: What happened?

Winther: Just fell out -- fell in and fell out!

Teiser: Did you grab something?

Winther: Oh yes. Those kind of experiences you forget, you know -- you never think of 'em. Happens to everybody.

Teiser: Traditionally people who work around the water can't swim. Isn't that right?

Winther: Yes. It seems that way. Seems to run that way. [Laughter] But these athletes, you know, who go into these gyms and everything? Well that's all they do, no wonder they're good swimmers! If they had to work -- be around the water -- why, it'd be a little different.

Teiser: Of all the things that you've seen happen on the Bay, what do you think is the worst? What do you really wish hadn't happened?

Winther: P-o-l-l-u-t-i-o-n! That's the worst. That'll never . . . It'll take generations for it to get back, even if they stopped it dead today, it'd take generations to get back to where it was when I started.



- Teiser: Are you speaking of solid wastes or liquid wastes -- sewage or garbage?
- Winther: Anything that's pollution. 'Course it's pretty hard to eliminate these storm sewers that come from the different cities. Unless they have a filter station for that to go through first.
- Teiser: Treasure Island still doesn't have a very good system, does it?
- Winther: Treasure Island? They're building it [a waste treatment plant] now. Pretty soon they'll eliminate it.

#### Other California Harbors

- Teiser: How long were you with the Army Engineers?
- Winther: From the last part of 1929 until I retired in 1958.
- Teiser: Did you continue doing surveys throughout that whole period?
- Winther: Yes. Of course we had different equipment, you know. Our territory ran from Crescent City down to Big Sur, down below Monterey.
- Teiser: Was your work in so-called inland waterways, or . . . ?
- Winther: In and out. Both. Of course we had different harbors along the coast to maintain: Monterey, Moss Landing, Santa Cruz, and up here to Half-Moon Bay, the San Francisco bar, Fort Bragg, Eureka and Crescent City.
- Teiser: What changes have taken place in those harbors in your observation?
- Winther: There on the coast they're subject to storms. More violent storms than in the Bay. And the only change made there was putting in breakwaters and making





- Winther: artificial harbors, protective harbors of course. The fish boats didn't have a place to go. They needed protection out there. When a fish boat gets caught in a storm before they had an artificial harbor they had a long ways to go for safety, and of course that helped them out of a lot -- a short distance to go for these natural harbors they could ride out a storm or lay up for the winter.
- Teiser: In my days I've seen Half-Moon Bay and Bodega Bay change with those big breakwaters. Do they have any harmful effects, such breakwaters?
- Winther: Only by design. The design which is very hard to do -- you have to understand the different currents -- the coastal currents. And those currents take along a tremendous amount of material on the bottom, such as sand. And if you don't design it properly, that sand will find its way within the breakwater system and fill up the bay that you spent millions of dollars to build for protection. That's quite a nuisance, to have to go and maintain that type of harbor. Keep it deep. When you have to combat nature in that respect, why you got a job on your hands.
- Teiser: What happened in your Army Engineers work during World War II?
- Winther: We were flooded with work. We were snowed under with work.
- Teiser: What kind? Did you have different kinds of duties added?
- Winther: Oh yeah. We had to take care of all the Army facilities, their harbors and so forth, and the Naval harbors, and locations where they wanted to locate -- did all the preliminary survey for them.
- Teiser: Did you have to do any kind of surveillance at all?
- Winther: No. 'Course in twelve months, you know, to cover our territory we had to keep going pretty rapid, up and down the coast and all the Bay as far as Martinez. Kept you going.





Ernest W. Winther during interview. Photographs by Catherine Harroun.



Masters, Mates and Pilots Union

Teiser: You said that you were for two years president of the union . . .

Winther: Masters, Mates and Pilots.

Teiser: What years were those?

Winther: It was '48 and '49, I think, maybe '50.

Teiser: Had you been a member of the union since the early days?

Winther: I was a member with 'em quite a few years, started in 1929.

Teiser: They were well-established by then, of course.

Winther: Oh yes, yes. And of course they were an organization that kept up the inland boating system.

Teiser: How did you happen to become president?

Winther: I was elected.

Teiser: You must have done something that made them think you'd be a good president.

Winther: Well, I don't know. Just something out of the blue. Just came up, asked me if I'd accept it, I said yes.

Teiser: Had you held other offices?

Winther: No. No, just a member. A dues-paying member.

Teiser: The years that you were president -- was it a critical time at all in the history of the union?

Winther: It was critical for a length of time there -- strikes. Strikes made it very critical -- tugboat strikes. Oh, not as severe as it is today.\*

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\*A tugboat strike was in progress at the time of the interview.



Teiser: This is a long one. What were they striking for then?

Winther: Conditions. Wages, and hours and different things like that -- that's what any strike consists of anyhow. Mostly wages.

Teiser: Did you feel that it was a reasonable strike?

Winther: Well, I'll tell you, when you get members, different members is like Democrats and Republicans, the way they think it should go and the way they vote cause the strikes. Some don't want to, some do. So the majority wins.

Teiser: You didn't take over as president during a strike?

Winther: No. Before the strike came. They come suddenly. They come overnight.

Teiser: It must have been a hard job, then.

Winther: In a sense it was, yes -- it's a nuisance job. It worries you a bit, you know. You want things to come out right for your members. You're looking out for your members, and sometimes it don't always go that way.

Teiser: Was there more than one strike in your term?

Winther: No, just one. One was enough.

Teiser: Did it come out all right, did you think?

Winther: Yes. It came out to their satisfaction. It lasted a few years. Not the strike, the conditions -- after the strike was over.

Teiser: Oh, I see -- the settlement lasted. How long was the strike itself?

Winther: I think at that time it was three months. I don't think it was much over that.

Teiser: Did the members of the families that owned the tugboats or the executives operate any of them during the strike?





Winther: None of those families took over personally. They were doing their work ashore. They had to be in the office because there was so much to take care of. Of course, years before that they did. Long before there was any unions or anything, then they used to, when they were younger, get around, and they didn't hire [many men.] The personnel was pretty good sized when they had all those tugs, though. That's one of their tugs there in that picture, when Spreckels had a competitive company, Black Stacks and the Merchants' Exchange, the Red Stacks.

Teiser: That Fort Point picture. But there was no point at issue in that strike other than just wages and hours, not . . .

Winther: That's all.

Teiser: And then you retired from holding office in the union after that, or did you hold other offices?

Winther: No, a few years after that I retired from them. I'm still a member, in the Rocking Chair Fleet.

#### Accidents and Rescues

Teiser: You were on the Bay during the building of the Carquinez Bridge?

Winther: I was working for a private party [then], and we took moving pictures of the whole construction job. From the beginning to the end of that bridge. That was a big thing. The first bridge built around here, and that was a big thing in them days.\*

Teiser: Where are those movies now, I wonder?

Winther: I wonder also myself. I don't know where they are.

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\*It was completed in 1927.



Teiser: Was this a private individual who just wanted those movies, or was this incidental to something else?

Winther: Private. No, it was the Weaver family of the [San Francisco] Studebaker agency that took all these pictures. Hart Weaver.

Teiser: How come?

Winther: That was one of his hobbies.

Teiser: Where'd you take them from?

Winther: From a boat. He had his own private yacht, the Frivilla. And from that yacht we took these pictures; Every once in a while we'd go up there when there was a span being hoisted up. That system of building the bridge was different than the rest of them. They built the spans, completed the spans and hoisted 'em up into place. Now they build bridges right on the spot. The whole bridge is built right from cranes.

Teiser: I think I remember that Crowley tugs were hired to patrol under the bridge -- so if anybody fell off. . .

Winther: Well, they had the contract launch. That was a small boat for that purpose. Yes, they did.

Teiser: That's an aspect of bridge-building I don't ordinarily think of.

Winther: That was purely for safety. But then they put nets under 'em. Well, they had an unfortunate accident on the Golden Gate Bridge. One of those aluminum wheels with this cage that the workmen were on underneath the bridge collapsed and spilled quite a few men into a net. That sudden shock that the net took broke the net and some of 'em went overboard. So, regardless of what safety precautions you took, you have to have a safety precaution for that safety precaution! You don't know which is going to work out.

Teiser: Were you ever in any wrecks?



Winther: Yes, I was in the Oakland-Antioch railroad wreck. That Oakland-Antioch train hit the Key System [train] that we were on -- my father and I -- and killed quite a few people.

Teiser: Where did it hit?

Winther: Just down about where the toll gate is located today -- the Oakland-Bay Bridge toll gate. The tracks used to run along there. The track was stalled through [poor] visibility. The motorman saw a block against him, and it was kind of raining that day -- misty and here the Oakland Antioch train come behind, running on the same track. And he hit the rear end of this two-car local train -- Key System -- and he plowed up the whole train and killed an enormous lot of people.

Teiser: When was that?

Winther: What year was that . . . somewhere's in 1914 or '16.

Teiser: You weren't hurt?

Winther: Just by coincidence, we had to run for the train to catch it, and the first door that was open we piled on. Ordinarily, we always sat in a rear car. This particular day we were in the first car. Everybody in the rear car got killed. I don't know what you'd call that?

Teiser: Luck, I guess! [Laughter] Where were you going?

Winther: My father was going to the Marine Hospital in San Francisco. He had to go over there about once a week and I went with him. And this was one of the days.

Far as accidents were concerned, I wasn't in very many accidents, but I was in a terrific lot of rescues. I rescued twenty-one men off the Bay Bridge while it was being built. On the first pier on the east side of Goat Island, when all the creosote fender system on that caught fire. Do you remember that?

Teiser: No, I don't.



Winther: Well the flames -- the creosote was all new -- and the flames reached to the upper deck of the bridge. I was close by, the only boat close by, and I rushed up there to rescue a couple of men I seen waving, and it turned out to be 19 men piled aboard this survey vessel that we used to have, named H. L. Demeritt.

Teiser: That was the Army survey vessel you spoke of?

Winther: Yeah. I took these men off -- of course the flames were running around. Those piers were pretty large, and I laid alongside. Of course there's more to the story than that -- I'm leaving out a lot of the details, takes too long to put it together. Anyway, after these 19 men came aboard I put 'em over on Goat Island -- the dock was over there -- unloaded em, because they were workmen on the bridge. They got down there to fight the fire and they couldn't get back up. Their small contract boat that took them around to different jobs on this pier put 'em aboard this pier to fight the fire, but the flames increased so rapidly -- they'd throw buckets of water on the fire and it was like throwing gasoline on it! So they didn't have a chance. So they were getting burnt out and I happened to be there just in time . . .

Teiser: Where was their contract boat?

Winther: Somewhere else on the job.

Teiser: It had just left them?

Winther: Well, he had to go by orders, you know. They have to go to a different job, dump the men there, then go some place else. Just by luck I was close by to rescue them. I have some [clippings.]\*

Teiser: What other rescues were you involved in?

Winther: I rescued this lighthouse keeper that left Southampton

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\*See also pp. 114-115.





Winther: Shoal lighthouse in the middle of a storm and he capsized, and on top of his ordinary street clothes he had oilskins and boots on and it's a wonder he stayed afloat long enough to be rescued.

Teiser: When was that, about?

Winther: 1907. We happened to have -- we'd keep these boats in the davits ready to drop for any such purpose. It just so happened that it was handy; we dropped this boat and I went out to rescue him and that's the time the storm brewed -- there was no traffic on the Bay for three days. It interfered with the ferry boat schedules.

Teiser: You mean the ferry boats didn't even go across the Bay?

Winther: Not until it abated quite a bit.

Teiser: For three days?

Winther: They were interfered with. The schedule was interfered with for three days.

Then another time there was five big 250-pound Irishmen from Richmond who were going to take a little cruise on the Bay to go to the Paradise Cove -- you know where that's located? From Richmond. And the ebb tide got ahold of 'em. They were absolutely amateurs in the Bay and they didn't know how the currents were running and the strong ebb tide -- minus tide -- was taking 'em out down by Alcatraz, heading for the Golden Gate. I happened to be just coming along with a boat, and I seen 'em, and went over and picked them up, and they were scared. One fellow had a derby hat on and he was bailing out the boat as fast as the water was coming in.

Teiser: What kind of a boat were they in?

Winther: A little skiff. Mind you -- five big Irishmen and a little bit of a skiff that didn't have much freeboard. Another quarter of a mile further they'd have been in that severe tide-rip that's off Alcatraz Island on every ebb-tide. So I got there



Winther: in the nick of time, picked 'em up; incidentally, I happened to know each one of 'em -- from Richmond. So I gave 'em a grand old bawling out and brought 'em back to Richmond. [Laughter] So they never got to Paradise Cove like they intended to. They were a long ways from home -- that's a good five miles from where they were going.

Teiser: You said you rescued airplanes?

Winther: Yeah, that's another story. When the Army and Navy did a lot of training around the Bay here, [after] the beginning of World War II, and of course the equipment wasn't as good then as it is today. They were ordinary different types of gas engines then. And these pilots would have trouble and they'd drop into the Bay here and there. They'd try to find 'em. They couldn't. They'd give up. So they'd call on the Army Engineers, and I was sent out to find 'em. So I developed a method. That citation in that room back there -- did you notice it?-- that's from the 26 planes I found that they'd lost -- that they'd give up looking for. So I did that for the Army and Navy and I got a couple of nice letters from 'em.

Teiser: What was your method -- can you explain?

Winther: Well it's just -- cross-section the section where the plane is surmised [to have gone down.] So many different stories come up. One party that witnessed it says it fell here and another party says it fell there, different locations. So that's like finding a needle in a haystack; in this Bay there's different depths. Sometimes you'd get the wrong location through some of these witnesses that witnessed the accident. They wouldn't describe it just right. Well, it's pretty hard to figure it out. Then you had to combat the currents, you had to figure out what kind of a current on that particular day and time, how it was then, so I'd cross-section it and lay it out and then find it through the electronic system we had, our sounding machine. That was the first time sounding machines were ever used to locate anything under the surface of the water.



Teiser: That is, when the soundings would change rapidly, you would assume there was something under there?

Winther: Well, it would give you a sort of a picture. This would describe it burnt on paper; there's a special paper they had for this sounding machine for the recording, and it would burn a picture; it would describe an object laying down on the bottom. But the Bay right today is loaded with empty drums (course they're full of water now), such things as that -- different objects laying down there now. But a plane -- you'd have to study the graph close enough so as to determine whether it was a hollow or a solid that you was running over. And most of the times it came out right.\*

### The Shrinking Bay

Teiser: What is on the bottom of the Bay?

Winther: Well, just mention it, that's it! [She laughs] Everything you can think of! When World War II was over, the Navy had all its ships anchored around here and they had to unload all the surplus materials they had. If it didn't go on the barge, if it missed the barge, it went overboard. There was a contract barge operated by Crowley -- he took the contract to take a barge from ship-to-ship to get their surplus. And of course, other ships, private ships, would throw an awful lot of surplus overboard. We didn't know about because all the heavy stuff would sink. And if the Bay could be drained dry you'd have the surprise of your life -- what's on the bottom. They've found everything -- even guns, military equipment, big guns, and anchors galore, hulls of ships, drums -- oil drums that fill up and sink, by the thousands.

Teiser: That aggregation must change the Bay too, then doesn't it?

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\*See also pp. 110-112.



- Winther: No, it sinks. In due time it'll sink in the mud. Of course two-thirds of the Bay is mud, and different sections of the Bay is sand, so when the currents are too severe, material can get buried up. But you'd be surprised; there's a hole just west of Goat Island there in 135 feet of water that they use for dumping big and heavy materials in; that never fills up, the current sees to that. They've been dumping mud there for many years but the currents distribute that soft material around here and there, and that's some of the perimeter fill. 'Course that's part of civilization.
- Teiser: Where do they bring mud from? To put in there?
- Winther: Harbor maintenance. Channels. Keep the channels deep. The channels are constantly filling in.
- Teiser: Maybe if they dumped the mud someplace else they wouldn't fill in so quickly.
- Winther: Well there's no place else to dump it without enormous cost. And, you wouldn't want to tow it to different mud flats, 'cause these dredges that draw too much water they can not get in on mud flats and distribute it there. And if they did, if there was any currents there the current would take it away and distribute it where it wanted it.
- Teiser: You think there's a whole aggregation of objects that got carried outside the Golden Gate?
- Winther: Some of the material on the bottom does find its way out there through the strong currents, but after it gets out to the Gate then it starts to be buried up in the fine sand out there. So like the hospital ship, Benevolent, well it sank there, and it's all covered up with sand now. There's a big ship for you. Like the Rio de Janiero. That's under sand now, it's been there long enough. Yes, there's a constant rotation, of movement all the time. And the current in the Bay is much stronger on the bottom than it is on the surface. See the volume is down there, and believe me that's powerful -- that gets 'em moving. That is powerful.





- Teiser: This is a recent San Francisco Bay entrance chart.
- Winther: Yeah, um hum -- the Golden Gate. This channel goes out to the Golden Gate through here. This is for navigational purposes. They have two rules to go by, inland waterway and out in the ocean.
- Teiser: Are these lighter areas deep water?
- Winther: This is deep water; this runs out to the thirty-six foot contour here. This is the 18-foot. See, they increased that -- it used to stop at the 18-foot.
- Teiser: What used to stop?
- Winther: Contour. They started at 18-foot and from then on it was deep water, but now they don't consider that deep, only up to the 36-foot. Now, you see, how narrow the Bay is here now, how small it is, when it used to be this size? The Berkeley flats -- that used to be six and ten feet of water there.
- Teiser: And it's now . . .?
- Winther: Five feet, four feet. Filling up. This used to be all marshland through here . . .
- Teiser: Richmond Harbor, and . . .
- Winther: This was where the old Golden Gate Ferry used to be.
- Teiser: That big pier that comes out from Berkeley?
- Winther: Yes. This is the pier, right here, that caught fire.
- Teiser: Oh, I see. The pier of the bridge, near Treasure Island. Let's see -- before this bridge was built, what did it look like at the East Bay edge?
- Winther: I'll give you a picture of it. You know where the 16th Street S.P. depot is down here in Oakland? Well, there's a railroad track runs along there; the water at high tide used to wash on those tracks. See, that was along here, and all that's



Winther: filled in, see. All this here, what you see here, is all filled-in land.

Teiser: Alameda, and the edge of Bay Farm Island . . .

Winther: . . . all of this, all of this, clear back in here is all filled in.

Teiser: You're pointing to land all the way along the East Shore, to the west of the East Shore highway.

Winther: That's all filled. Used to be a big powder works here. That's gone.

Teiser: In Albany.

Winther: That's all filled. This here -- you see that . . .

Teiser: Around Brook's Island.

Winther: . . . from Brook's Island there (see, there's the size of Brook's Island) all that's filled in.

Teiser: All that light area.

Winther: Used to be all deep water here. This used to be a wonderful crab spawning grounds.

Teiser: What's now Richmond Inner Harbor?

Winther: Yes. And of course all this mud flats here -- that's still there. That's San Pablo Bay; that's natural.

Teiser: The eastern side of San Pablo Bay; yes, I see.

Winther: All this is filled in, all that's filled in . . .

Teiser: Now you're pointing to areas on the western side -- San Rafael Bay . . .

Winther: . . . north of Tiburon. And this is San Rafael over here. That's all filled in. There used to be four to six feet of water between that island and the mainland.

Teiser: Marin Island, right? And now it's solid.



Winther: And down here, here's Hunter's Point. That's all filled in. They made Hunter's Point; that used to be all deep water in there.

Teiser: Where's Winehaven?

Winther: Winehaven was in here. It was right in here.

Teiser: Richmond?

Winther: Yeah. See this Molate? Now, here's Winehaven in here.

Teiser: Oh, yes, it's halfway between Point Orient and Point Molate. "Mohlátee" did you call it?

Winther: "Moláhtee." That used to be one of the first big industries on the Bay, where the wine from California was brought in here, and processed, and shipped overseas. Ships used to come in and load a thousand barrels of wine and quite a few barrels was taken over to Europe, stayed there a while, aged and brought back here under a different label.\*

But since the Navy took over all this property for their own use, of course the buildings are the originals today, the brick buildings, all originals from the Winehaven people in them days.

Teiser: But the land has been filled in so that the ships can't come up there?

Winther: Of course that dock that used to be out there run out to deep water. Was never maintained. The Navy had no use for it so they took it down. But it's an oil -- mostly a lube oil -- station for the Navy. But that was a wonderful place in them days. Everybody that worked there lived right on the property, had their own residence. There were no cars in them days to commute with.

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\*This was a frequently repeated statement that has never been entirely substantiated by wine industry historians. But the possibility exists that some California wines were taken to Europe and blended with European wines that were exported to the United States. R.T.



Winther: This property, before the Santa Fe Railroad come in and Standard Oil was located . . .

Teiser: . . . in Richmond, yes . . .

Winther: . . . which was in the late 1800's, that was open water through here.

Teiser: There was a channel? There was water?

Winther: There was a channel through there. And the river steamers used to leave San Francisco, and instead of going 'way around here, used to take a shortcut and go through here, right through here, and come out . . .

Teiser: The channel would be from Brook's Island . . .

Winther: . . . right on through to San Pablo Bay.

Teiser: And all this is filled in between Richmond and Point Richmond, I guess, is that right?

Winther: That's right. All this area here is called Point Richmond.

Teiser: Who filled it?

Winther: Well, different private industries, like the Santa Fe Railroad, and Standard Oil.

Teiser: How far down at the south end of the Bay was it navigable when you first knew it.

Winther: Clear to San Jose. It's still that way today if you stay in the channel; the channel of course is narrower now than it was then. One of your charts shows the waterways down there.

Teiser: [Looking at chart.] Here's the Redwood City port. The channel went all the way down here?

Winther: It's about the limit of the deep water.

Teiser: Coyote Creek. . .

Winther: That's where a lot of scows used to go down, also, and pick up fruit, grain, anything that the southern part of the Bay produced.





Teiser: This is Alviso Slough. That channel hasn't closed up much?

Winther: Oh, yes. It's closed up considerable. All over, it has. But deep water, deep enough for small vessels to go right directly into that country down there.

Teiser: How about the other way, toward Petaluma?

Winther: Same. You mean shallowing up? Oh, yes. It's filling up there too.

Teiser: Did there used to be a lot of commerce by water up to Petaluma?

Winther: Oh yes. Deep, and there was a lot of freight.

Teiser: What kind?

Winther: General. The chicken business started. The Steamer Petaluma, she used to bring down the chicken eggs to San Francisco. Before the trucks started, you see, and this is where she went, all the way up here to Petaluma.

Teiser: There are still some docks up there, aren't there? Are they used now?

Winther: They're all antiques now. They're rotted out. They'd never replace 'em. Never replace them anymore. Trucks do all the work now, where different boats used to do it before. It's cheaper, quicker, at the present day; but it threw a lot of men out of work.

#### Railroad Ferries and Excursion Boats

Teiser: Before the Carquinez Bridge went in, do you remember the transferring of the trains?

Winther: Yes. The largest ferry boat in the world. Well, that wasn't too long ago -- that was in my time. They eliminated it. The bridges drove them out.



Teiser: Where did it go from?

Winther: Port Costa over to Benicia. All the overland trains went that way, on the enormous big ferries they had. 'Course the railroad schedule was a little slower then. But now they go over that Carquinez Bridge.

Teiser: How big was the ferry?

Winther: Well, it was big enough to take a whole big train.

Teiser: How many cars long?

Winther: Well, if I remember correctly, it was about eight.

Teiser: Eight-car sections . . . my word! What happened to it, I wonder, after the bridge was built?

Winther: Well, they sold it. They were pretty old boats, and they didn't maintain 'em -- too costly. Of course they were all steam operated, you know -- pretty costly to operate.

Teiser: Did they have more than one of those big ferries?

Winther: Oh, yes. But the only place they used 'em was right there, at that section. They were maintained by the railroad company.

Teiser: But they had to have several?

Winther: Oh, they had a substitute, you know, in case of a breakdown. Had at least three.

Teiser: Even now, railroad cars are ferried around the Bay, aren't they?

Winther: The only car ferry on the Bay today is the Western Pacific railroad. They use the night service. They marshall 'em up in the daytime, and transport 'em at different locations in the nighttime. Las Palomas is the name of that ferry. And that's still operating. I was on her for a while. I was pilot on her for a while. When? Let's see -- oh, about 15 or 16 years ago.



Teiser: That would've been . . .

Winther: After I retired from the Army Engineers, yes.  
'Course it wasn't a steady job, but substitute.  
Some of these crew members went into the hospital or  
retired, on vacation, so I'd just substitute for 'em.

Teiser: There are a lot of special boats around the Bay still,  
aren't there?

Winther: There's a few, yes.

Teiser: What other kinds are there?

Winther: Do you mean of the long-established?

Teiser: Yes.

Winther: Of course they have the new ones. Take the tourist  
boats out of Pier 43. The original ones that were there  
are all gone. Harbor Queen, Harbor-this, Harbor-  
that. When Crowley started the first ones in 1915 --  
the fair of 1915 -- run over to Paradise Cove with  
the boats, you know. Double-deckers, and they were  
for tourist purposes, take 'em over to a picnic. They  
started at the 1915 fair.

The Shrinking Bay, continued.

Teiser: Did you observe the filling of the Marina there  
before the 1915 fair, the Panama Pacific?

Winther: Oh, yes. To build that fair grounds? Oh yes, that  
was all swamp land. They filled it in from Lombard  
Street to the waterfront.

Teiser: How far north and south was it filled?

Winther: That's from the Presidio gates to Van Ness Avenue,  
on the south.

Teiser: That's the other side of Fort Mason?

Winther: Yes. It was swampy marshland in there, in spots,  
'course they had to fill it.



- Teise: Was it swampy around ~~the base~~ of Fort Mason?
- Winther: In spots, yes. It was a peculiar piece of ground, very peculiar. I remember the time just before they built that fair there I could buy a lot in that Marina for \$50. An opportunity all shot!
- Teiser: There was some kind of a picnic ground and swimming club out there, wasn't there? Harbor View?
- Winther: That rowing club? That's been there for years. Do you mean that?
- Teiser: Before the fair. It was called Harbor View, and people swam, and there was some sort of a beach?
- Winther: There was more or less of a beach there all the time, yes, that was there, but there wasn't too many people then. 'Course that was in on the Presidio grounds then, you know; you couldn't venture in there, too much. They were more restricted then than they are now.
- Teiser: Was there a recreation house?
- Winther: No, no, there wasn't that much, but there was a rowing club, like there is today. Been there for many years.
- Teiser: I was thinking of up toward the Palace of Fine Arts, around there.
- Winther: No. That was all marshland. Right where the Palace of Fine Arts, right there, that was all tules.
- Teiser: Was there wild-life in there much?
- Winther: Well, outside of a few ducks -- that's all.
- Teiser: You have certainly seen changes in what's been on Angel Island. Have you seen any changes in the shape of the island?
- Winther: The only change is that they cut off the top of it a little ways for a building site for something there, but that's before the State even took it over for a park.





Teiser: Did they used to call it Mt. Ida?

Winther: Yes. It's always been known as Angel Island.  
But the mountain itself had a different name.

And this is Knox Shoals, that's part of it . . .

Teiser: Oh, yes. Right off Angel Island.

Winther: See all this here is dredged out and brought over here for fill.

Teiser: To Treasure Island.

Winther: And Presidio Shoals is here, that's pretty well gone -- brought over here for fill. And Alcatraz Shoals that's located here, and that's fill, for Treasure Island. A borrow pit. You see, there's the result. There's the borrow pit -- they took material out to fill in the rest of the island -- the last part of it.

Teiser: Oh, yes, just to the east of Treasure Island.

Winther: They cut that down from -- oh, say 13 or 10 feet or something -- they got it down to 42 and 43 feet depth.

Teiser: That really took dredging didn't it?

Winther: They took a lot of yardage out of there.

Teiser: It was the Navy that built Treasure Island.

Winther: No. No, it was built for the City of San Francisco for their airport. But the Navy says, "You don't want no airport -- we'll take it for our own use."  
[Laughter]

Teiser: Who did all that dredging?

Winther: The Army Engineers.

Teiser: By contract with the City of San Francisco, or what?

Winther: No, they filled it themselves, they -- Well, all the different jobs out in the Bay was done, and they done it for . . . how San Francisco compensated for



Winther: it, I don't know. That's all done in Washington. But anyway we surveyed this whole thing, and built it, put the preliminary in there first, and so they could estimate the yardage. Nobody else could do it; there wasn't any such thing as a big dredging company like today, you know. So the government had to do that.

Teiser: I suppose you had to keep going into Richardson's Bay, too, didn't you?

Winther: Well, that was pretty shallow up in here, but out here it was deep enough for big ships to anchor. Do you see how that's filling in now? No water there at all for a big ship.

Teiser: Between Sausalito and Belvedere big ships could go in?

Winther: Oh yes, they'd anchor there. Whalers used to come in. Used to be a codfish plant here, and their fleet of codfish schooners all anchored in here.

Teiser: The codfish plant was at Belvedere?

Winther: Right here. Yes, we used to go over there, take a look at 'em. Get a little codfish.

Teiser: Was it good?

Winther: Oh, you bet your life! All that came down from Alaska, you know. All that -- those fish. Once a year the fleet would go up.

### Ships in the Bay

Winther: Just like the Alaska Packers would bring in the salmon. They'd go up to Alaska once a year. The Alaska Packers had their anchorage in here, also.

Teiser: In Alameda, in the estuary? Oh, is that where?

Winther: Well, they anchored here and unloaded, out here where the Bay Bridge is today; they anchored there



Winther: and unloaded, then they laid the fleet up here [in the estuary] 'cause that was their lay up anchorage. Until the next season.

Teiser: But how did they unload?

Winther: Well, they'd go to the piers in San Francisco. But the anchorage was out here. Now from this lighthouse out on the shoals I counted fifty-six sailing vessels anchored one time. Of course that was only a drop in the bucket. Used to be 100 or more anchored here at one time. That was quite a sight to see all those vessels anchored here in the Bay.

Teiser: No wonder some of them lost their anchors.

Winther: Oh, in this here [pointing to chart] it's loaded with tons and tons of anchors.

Teiser: This is between Alcatraz to south of where the bridge is now, that whole area.

Winther: Yes. Now this is marked off for Naval anchorages. Down there is the Naval Anchorage and this is the merchant marine anchorage in here.

Teiser: North of the Bay Bridge is private and south is Naval, I see. Well next time perhaps we can look at your old chart and compare it with this a little bit. Didn't you have an older one that showed quite some changes? It certainly looks different, doesn't it?

Winther: This is 1947, before the San Rafael-Richmond Bridge was built. They were building the Naval Air Station here then. They have a different method today of compiling one of these.

Teiser: Were you ever a bar pilot?

Winther: Not a bar pilot, no. I wasn't in politics enough to get a job from the state on that, but locally here in the Bay I did some of that work.

Teiser: Piloting.

Winther: But I did make a limit on it because I was too



Winther: engrossed in this other -- Army Engineers and private jobs, you know -- you can't be all over at the same time. Stay here for a little while, and some place else . . .

Teiser: You did just occasional piloting jobs?

Winther: Once in a while, yes. I did an awful lot of tug boat work.

Teiser: For what company?

Winther: Oh, for private outfits, and of course our own. With the Army Engineers we did our own. Took care of all our ships ourselves.

In the early days, the river boats used to leave San Francisco at six o'clock and get into Sacramento at six o'clock in the morning. And the early transportation to Mare Island on the General Frisbie and other Monticello Steamship Company boats -- oh yes, I remember all them were operating. And when the White Fleet went around the world and met this Pacific Fleet they anchored by Southampton Shoal lighthouse and came in after Dewey came in the Golden Gate. I remember all that.

### Stern-Wheelers, Barges, Tugs and Pilots

Winther: Well, I can explain some of the ancient and antique vessels that were up the river in them days and on the Bay. There used to be a company that had a powerful -- do you know what a stern-wheeler is? That's a vessel with a paddle wheel in the stern. It used to be a very picturesque sight on the Bay here when you'd see one of those big vessels towing barges down from Sacramento and Stockton down to the Bay with grain. They made a train of barges on a towline. These barges run two to four-hundred feet long. And when you get three or four of those in a train and this vessel towing it, it was quite a sight you'll never see again.

Teiser: I didn't know those stern-wheelers had that much power.





Winther: Oh yes. This particular one was called San Joaquin No. 4, did all that towing.

Teiser: Who owned San Joaquin No. 4?

Winther: Some Delta company up there.

Teiser: Where did they unload the grain?

Winther: At the San Francisco waterfront on different vessels, and then they had the warehouses. But that's all brought down from up river. The steamers -- this is overseas shipment -- the steamers go directly up to Stockton and Sacramento and load it there themselves nowadays.

Teiser: It was loaded on the barges up in Stockton and Sacramento?

Winther: And then towed down here to the steamers.

Teiser: How did they handle the grain then?

Winther: All sacks on hand trucks. Forklifts in them days were unknown.

Teiser: How long did it take to unload a barge?

Winther: Oh, it took a couple of days. Had tons and tons of it. But now they handle most of that in bulk up there, on the other end.

Teiser: It took a couple days to unload one barge?

Winther: All slow motion, one man on a truck. All depends on how many truckers they had.

Teiser: It meant that ship loading was kept in port longer, didn't it?

Winther: Oh yes, in them days there was plenty of time to load and unload, but today it's rush, rush, rush. Everything is in packages. A lot of automation today.



Teiser: What other sorts of things did they move on barges?

Winther: Lumber, hay. Most anything that you see on the highways today in trucks. Same thing.

There was an accident one time around 1907 or '08. Two river steamers collided in the fog, off Angel Island. The name of one of 'em was Cochrane, and he had a safe aboard. And when she capsized the safe went through the roof of the cabin and it's laying out in the Bay still on the bottom there with ten thousand dollars in it. [She laughs] So that's a good pastime for anybody that wants to go and look for ten thousand dollars. Skin divers.

Teiser: Did you see it?

Winther: I was at Southampton lighthouse at the time, when that happened.

Teiser: Could you see it?

Winther: Oh yes, after the fog cleared up, we could see the steamers laying there. 'Course they towed it into shallow waters and saved it, re-righted it again. But the safe went through the roof. 'Course that was nothing but tongue and groove lumber in those superstructures in those boats.

Teiser: The thing had turned over?

Winther: Capsized, and then the safe wasn't bolted down [both laughing] and it just fell out!

Another time there, in that same time of the year, around '07, '08, or '09 -- I don't quite remember it now, a British steamer was coming down with a load of grain in it . . .

Teiser: Down the river?

Winther: Down the river into the Bay here. In them days a tug generally pilots 'em down by leading the vessel into the channel. In deep water, and off Angel Island, almost in the same place as the steamer



Winther: capsized with this safe aboard, the steamer overran the tug and capsized and sank it. Whitelaw the Wrecker he dragged it over there, by different stages, over where Treasure Island is today. And he raised it up from there.

Teiser: How did he drag it?

Winther: Well, he had his own methods there. He put floats on it, and the tide helped every high water to lift it off the bottom, and dragged it up into a little more shallow water, until he finally got it shallow enough so as to operate right from the surface, direct. So they got it back. The tug's name was Sea Prince.

Teiser: What was the ship's name, do you remember that?

Winther: No, I don't. It was "Something Castle"\* -- some big English vessel.

Teiser: Did that happen often that tugs were . . .

Winther: Well, they guided vessels all the time like that. Instead of putting a towline on 'em. As long as they're under their own power it was easy enough, but somebody was negligent and didn't watch out where the tug was, and 'course the steamer put on a little more speed than the tug had and run it down; that's the term you use on that.

Teiser: Tugs just guided boats?

Winther: Yes, they do that at different places.

Teiser: Do they still?

Winther: Yes, if the circumstances warrant it.

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\*Graystone Castle. For a fuller account of this accident, see the 1971 interview in this series: William J. McGillivray, Tugboats and Boatmen of California.



Teiser: You mean the tugboat man knows the channel and the ship's captain doesn't, is that the reason?

Winther: That's the reason. Just to guide 'em into the deep water there. That's a little better than putting a towline on 'em, see? As long as the ship is under its own power it's all right to do that.

Teiser: Why do they ever use towlines?

Winther: When a ship hasn't got its power. There's something down below that prevents 'em from using their own power. You look at that as only temporary. But they want to keep moving from dock to dock, save lost time.

Teiser: This was a regular function of towboats, was it? To guide ships?

Winther: Oh yes, guide, tow, dock, anything. . .

Teiser: Did they guide 'em up the river, or did they . . .

Winther: No, a pilot takes 'em there.

Teiser: When did a tugboat guide a ship and when did a ship use a pilot? What was the difference between those?

Winther: Well, that difference is mainly when the ship has to go to sea directly the pilot takes it down and send it off to sea without going to a dock, but when the tugboat guides it down to a certain pier and they tie up, the tug helps dock that vessle at that pier where it's going.

Teiser: There are kinds of tugboat work that used to be done that aren't done any more, aren't there?

Winther: Yes, to a certain extent. But it's mainly the same routine, docking ships here and there, all hours of the day and night.

Teiser: I guess it was Mr. Gilliam who asked me to ask you whether the pilot could always got off the boat as he took it out of the Gate -- if it was true that sometimes they had to go all the way to Hawaii.





Winther: That was very seldom. That's on extremely rough days, when they can't unload 'em out at the Bar. The pilot boat out there takes care of that. They know who's on the boat and when that boat is going out so they hang around and take the pilot off, the same way as putting him on -- the same procedure. But when they can't get off and have to go to the destination, well that happens very seldom. That's only under severe bad weather. That's in a storm. Fog don't mean anything.

Teiser: Once a year?

Winther: Once a year or once in two or three years, you never know. There's no schedule on those things.

Teiser: [Laughter] I was just wondering, if the sea's that rough, the ships don't like to put out anyway do they?

Winther: Oh, it doesn't make any difference to the ship. They'd just as soon go out in a storm. But a fog is a different thing. Extra fog. Going out is easy enough, but coming in is another thing.

Teiser: Why would you use a pilot on a ship coming in instead of having it led by a tow?

Winther: Coming in? Well, you can't do that very well because the schedules are different. You don't know exactly when a ship is going to arrive at a certain destination around the Gate -- say the lightship -- for instance -- and there's no tug can lay out there and wait for them. The pilot boat does that. 'Cause that's their station.

Teiser: When did you work on the tubgoats?

Winther: Oh, off and on ever since I've started to . . . up the river, and here and there wherever a job showed up, but the last thirty years I was with the Engineers and we did all our own towing, and docking, with our own boats.

Teiser: Were you in charge of the boat?

Winther: Oh yes. Always in charge.



Teiser: What boats did you work on?

Winther: Quite a few. We had quite a fleet down on that Treasure Island job and then up the river, I really started on the Army Engineers' tug Rio Vista in 1917. That towed those dredges around and put them in position.

Teiser: Other than Army ones, what did you work on?

Winther: I'm just trying to think of names of different boats. And I worked for Petersen, the competitor of Crowleys in the old days on their boats; we'd go up to Pinole and load powder and bring it down to the different ships in the Bay and unload it, and whatever -- you'd never know what you'd have to do the next day.

Teiser: Was the powder on barges?

Winther: No, down in the hold of the vessel.

Teiser: Did the tug crew have to do the loading and unloading at that time?

Winther: No. On one end, on the receiving end, they had their own crew, the powder company had their own crew, to bring it down and help load it, 'cause we'd store it down below.

Teiser: Then when you got down here who took it off?

Winther: Well, that's another 50-50 thing, the ship's crew, we loaded, in swings. And I was with the Erikson Navigation Company, hauling hay and grain from up river down here to the waterfront in San Francisco, loaded it on different vessels. That's part of their cargo, the same way. Comes in here and there from all directions.

Teiser: Do you remember Henry Petersen?

Winther: Oh yes, I remember him well.

Teiser: What was he like?



- Winther: Oh, he was a big, heavy-set Swede. He started like Crowley did, but he didn't extend his business as much as Crowley did. And he gradually faded away when he got older. He changed hands and sold his boats and this and that.
- Teiser: But he had a fair-sized fleet at one time?
- Winther: Yes, he did. I think he had about four boats then.
- Teiser: Was the Crowley organization the largest of the tug-boat companies?
- Winther: Yes, there was only another one his size. That's that Petersen. And there was a couple small ones. Only had one or two boats. Just enough to make a living with. Shore boats, and they used to take crew members out -- they'd use 'em like taxis. 'Course, there was a lot of vessels, including steam vessels, used to anchor out in the Bay in them days. Now there's so few, there's room at the docks for em to go to. They don't have to resort to these small launches to take the crew ashore or bring 'em back.
- Teiser: How did Crowley happen to survive and the other didn't?
- Winther: Stock company.
- Teiser: More capital? But how'd he happen to get started getting the capital?
- Winther: The only one who can answer that is old Tom Crowley himself! The old man.
- Teiser: I guess he was a go-getter?
- Winther: Oh, yes. Evidently when he was a kid, he was running the boats all his life.



Whitehalls

Winther: Of course the first boats they used to pull out there is what they call a "Whitehall". You row that yourself. That's long before gas engines ever come out. And we used to have some pretty severe weather around the Bay in them days too.

Teiser: Did you ever row a Whitehall?

Winther: Oh, yes. Sure did. [Laughter] When I was a kid, from Southampton Shoal into Richmond. A pair of eight foot oars -- you sure hadda know how to handle it in order to get ashore and get back again.

Teiser: How did a Whitehall differ from other . . . ?

Winther: In the shape -- in the length and the round bottom. The smaller ones would be called dinghies, and these Whitehalls, they run around 14 to 18 feet long.

Teiser: Was it a practical kind of boat?

Winther: Well it was sea-worthy, for the size of it, you know you'd carry sometimes a pretty good load in those boats. It was either passengers, or freight, or groceries . . .

Teiser: It wouldn't tip over easily?

Winther: Oh, no. 'Course they were great for round-bottomed boats in them days.

And then the fishing industry had what they called a dory. That was semi V-bottomed and flat-bottomed -- straight sides, pretty good freeboard.

Teiser: How many people could you get in a Whitehall?  
How many men, without . . .

Winther: You mean safe?

Teiser: Yes.





Winther: Oh, four.

Teiser: Only four?

Winther: For safety, yes. 'Cause there's not much room. You have to leave room for the ones that's handling the boat, and the passengers sit in the stern.

Teiser: You mean you could have four passengers and the man rowing?

Winther: Yes. That's load enough.

Teiser: Did they ever have any shelter over them?

Winther: Oh, no. You couldn't have any windage. Anything that the wind would hit would slow you up. You were out in the open quite a bit in those small boats. 'Course that's long before the outboard motor too, you know. That come along and saved a lot of work.

Teiser: Yes, I should think. Must have been a hard way to make a living, rowing.

Winther: Well, that's what Tom Crowley used to do, and Petersen, all those old-timers on the waterfront. Of course they were young and husky men, too, in them days.

Teiser: How long did they continue using them?

Winther: Well quite a few years. I can recall in 1904, '05 and '06. The small boat went out about then. 'Course before that they had launches. And you had to be a big shot to own a launch.

Teiser: I don't suppose there's a Whitehall left anywhere around is there?

Winther: If there is it'd be an antique -- be a souvenir. There may be one around the old Meiggs Wharf, around the foot of Van Ness, might be one or two around there. They were built light, and if you don't keep 'em up they don't last very long.

Teiser: Who built them, do you think?



Winther: Oh, most anybody built one of them. But those small shipyards, like Kneass\* and Twigg. John Twigg was alongside of Kneass's down there. They built these small launches and cruisers and yachts and small boats.

### The Water Nymph

Winther: We used to have a waterboat on the Bay here called Water Nymph that brought fresh water out to all the ships that anchored out. That's all she did, carry water. She sold water.

Teiser: Who owned it?

Winther: There was a couple of fellows. That was their business. They made a living doing that. They brought water two or three times out to Southampton Shoal lighthouse when we had a dry winter. 'Course the water that we'd get there was off of the roof of the building; that's how we got our fresh water supply. Sometimes when you get low, you'd have to ask for more water and that's the way we got it. The Water Nymph brought it up there.

Teiser: How long did the Water Nymph go on operating, do you think?

Winther: Oh, they were here for many years, before my time.

Teiser: Until how late?

Winther: The last time she went around here was around 1915.

Teiser: Where did they get the water, I wonder?

Winther: San Francisco. Right out of the main line that run along the waterfront there. Metered it. They knew exactly how many gallons they could carry, and fill up.

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\*George W. Kneass.



Winther: Sold it by the gallon.

### Scows

Teiser: How many boats did Erikson have?

Winther: That Erikson Navigation had two what they call scows then. Powered scows.

Teiser: What were they used for?

Winther: Just carrying all kinds of lumber, hay, grain, whatever the river could produce -- those river towns.

Teiser: Did you ever work on the scows?

Winther: Oh yes! I was engineer on there.

Teiser: Were they hard to operate?

Winther: No, but the bad part of it, they'd work night and day. All night if they have to keep going. See, you only sleep when you get a chance to sleep, you don't tie up purposely for that. And you load until you're loaded, and then when you're loaded you start off, and go to your destination -- might be to some other part of the river -- up to Petaluma, or down to the waterfront here, up the Oakland estuary. It was quite a little business itself, taking care of everything in the Bay here. There is very little of it now -- hardly anything.

Teiser: What else did the scows carry? Groceries? Little cargo?

Winther: No. That went by train or truck.

Teiser: But they carried bulk stuff.

Winther: You should see some of those. The old time scows used to carry hay . . .

Teiser: In bales?



Winther: All in bales. Maybe six and eight tiers high -- quite a sight to see them under sail, coming down from the river, with tons and tons of hay and grain, like that . . .

Teiser: How was all that hay secured?

Winther: Well they lashed it down -- that's all lashed down.

Teiser: Ropes?

Winther: Oh yes.

Teiser: How big a crew did each of the scows have?

Winther: Well most of 'em all had around three men. That's all, to handle that.

Teiser: Who was in charge?

Winther: [Laughter] The scow skipper!

Teiser: The scow skipper, the engineer . . .

Winther: That's when they put engines in -- after they installed power into the scows, they they had an engineer.

Teiser: But before that they just had a . . .

Winther: Deck hands, a couple of deck hands besides the skipper, and they did everything.

Teiser: Did they put engines in those same boats -- the same scows that had earlier had just sails?

Winther: Oh yes. They started off with a little dingy, and that dingy had power in it just to tow them up the river when you don't have any wind. That was slow motion, but nevertheless they got there.

Teiser: How much power did the dingy have?

Winther: Maybe five or ten horsepower. Just offset a pair





Winther: of oars. If you'd get out and tow one of those boats with a pair of oars -- they call that jay-hawking -- if you made an inch or two an hour, you were doing [well] in some of those cases. [Both laugh] Quite a sight. Most of the time they'd lay at anchor until the wind come up. It was real slow motion in them days.

Teiser: How long did it take to sail from San Francisco to Sacramento, say?

Winther: It all depends on the wind. It took a day, or two days. Of course, when they got a chance to go they'd go night and day, never anchored just from daylight to daylight, wouldn't anchor all night. That was when they were under sail, but some had power and did that too. The only time they dropped anchor was when the wind went down, then they had long poles -- they used to pole themselves along where the water was shallow enough -- twenty-foot poles, you know -- and they'd push on those poles, and you can imagine the speed they had in them days poling themselves along. It was quite a sight!

Teiser: When they did anchor, when there was no wind, did everybody just go to bed or whatever?

Winther: Well, they had to. Did that waiting for the current. In them days we had current up the river, what they call an ebb flow or an outward flow, and that was fresh water all coming down. Well, they'd anchor against that -- they couldn't drift against it -- and wait'll the wind come up. That's the time they'd anchor, and they'd turn in. Give 'em a chance to get a little rest that way.

Teiser: Were there living quarters on the scows?

Winther: Oh, they were fixed up pretty nice -- bunks, you know, regular ship's bunks, a galley stove, the old coffee pot was going twenty-four hours a day.

Teiser: Who cooked?

Winther: Generally if the scow could afford it they hired a cook -- but if they couldn't afford it, one of the



Winther: crew members'd cook. I was cook there for a while; the cook he quit, the fellows had to eat, and I said, "I'll cook for a while."

Teiser: [Laughter] You have done everything.

Winther: A little of everything.

Teiser: What scow was that that you were cook on? Do you remember its name?

Winther: Eppinger. It belonged to the Erikson Navigation Company.

Teiser: When did they put motors in those?

Winther: When gas engines first came out. They started in powering these boats around 1904-'05'-06 in there. And those scows who had inboard power were considered the real thing -- they were real boats.

Teiser: Do you mean to say they put outboard power on some of them?

Winther: Well, the outboard power was in the dinghy.

Teiser: I see what you mean -- not quite attached!

Winther: So they put more horsepower inboard, in the scows themselves.

Teiser: Were they hard to handle?

Winther: No. Very easy. They all had centerboards. And that helped them a lot.

Teiser: But they were flat-bottomed?

Winther: Oh yes, really flat bottomed. There's one over there now, a sample at the foot of Van Ness Avenue in that museum.\* That's a little scow there, one of the originals.

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\*San Francisco Maritime Museum.



Teiser: You could lift the centerboard?

Winther: Oh, yes. You regulate that according to how deep a water you're in, you know. And the conditions of the sailing.

Teiser: You had to know the Bay to be able to run one?

Winther: Oh yes. They had pretty good men in them days around here. There was so many working on the water that they understood it pretty well, knew where the channels were, and so forth.

We had a scow on the Bay here one time that had a Spanish family -- one big family run the whole thing. The father was the skipper, and there was an all-girl crew! [Both laugh] And they had an unfortunate accident one dark stormy night in San Pablo Bay. They were coming down from Vallejo to San Francisco, and the mother, that particular night, stayed in Vallejo with the youngest child, and the father and the girls -- four in total I think -- they brought the scow down and they capsized in San Pablo Bay and they all drowned. That was a kind of unfortunate thing. They were running on the Bay here for a long, long time that family.

Teiser: Do you remember the family name?

Winther: No, no, I don't. Some Spanish name.

Teiser: Remember the name of the scow?

Winther: The Mystery.

Teiser: About when did it capsize?

Winther: I think it was 1908. Had a pretty good storm here.

Teiser: It seems hard to capsize a scow.

Winther: Well, they coming down in the night, and evidently a squall hit 'em. They were sailing. That's before they had power put in. And they were sailing and the squall hit 'em, and I guess they couldn't handle it.



Teiser: Were there many scows owned by just one person, and that was his whole livelihood?

Winther: That's the way it generally run, yes. There was one or two companies around here that had two or three scows.

Teiser: What were they, do you remember? Besides Erikson?

Winther: It's pretty hard . . . . Name of the scows, not the company names. Magnolia was a monstrous big scow on the Bay, Mono was another big scow; all these are recorded in that place the the foot of Van Ness Avenue, that Maritime Museum. They're all in there, all recorded. I've seen these pictures in the [exhibit]. Once in a while I go over there to refresh my memory.

Teiser: Why didn't they go on using scows?

Winther: Well because corporations came in. Big trucking firms located and took over a lot of the business -- just like the Greyhound bus, they drove the passenger boats off the river. That's why you don't have any passenger boats today; you can't compete, you know.

Teiser: I don't understand how, right now, with the tugboat strike on, the Bay can go on operating with the tugs.

Winther: Well, it's a little tough. But when you're compelled to do something, why, you can generally do it.

Teiser: Did you work on other tugs besides Petersen's?

Winther: No. By that time I changed. I went on to the yachts then.

Teiser: When you worked on the tugs did you ever have to sleep aboard them?

Winther: Oh yes. Building Treasure Island there, there was very few tugs there on that job, besides fifteen dredges.





Tieser: I just wondered if they had sleeping accommodations.

Winther: Yes, they were built with accommodations like that.

### Locating Lost Planes

Winther: I don't know if these interest you or not. That's when I was getting that citation.\* That's Colonel Marks handing me the citation for those planes . . . that the Army and Navy lost in the Bay. And I found 'em. And I was getting a citation, an award for that job.

Teiser: It's dated June 14, 1946. That's a good picture.

Winther: These here tell about the plane -- there was a write up in the paper.

Teiser: This is from the San Francisco News of June 17, 1946, and it says, "'Echo-Sounder' wins award. E. W. Winther Cited For New Technique." Article by Richard M. McFarland, the News ship reporter. And this was what you were explaining to me about using sounding equipment. Did they continue using that for a long time then?

Winther: Oh, yes. For sounding purposes.

Teiser: No, I mean for detecting planes lost in the Bay.

Winther: No, the Army and Navy got their own equipment after this and they did that themselves.

Teiser: Did they get this kind of equipment to do it with?

Winther: It was similar to it, yes. There were different makes -- different companies put out their own.

Teiser: But they wouldn't have thought to use this kind of equipment if it hadn't been for you?

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\*See frontispiece and pages 78-79.



Winther: I guess not. I don't know -- maybe. However, I was the first to put it in use for this purpose .

Teiser: Well I can see how they might have given you plenty of awards for figuring that out. The San Francisco Examiner, June 24, Oakland Tribune of June 23, and the San Francisco Call-Bulletin of June 21 of that same year all had articles on it.

Winther: We had our own paper printed over there in the office, and this is the write-up on that score.

Teiser: It's the San Francisco Engineer District Employee Relations Bulletin of July 2, 1946. Let me read this on to the tape.

"On June 14, 1946, Mr. Ernest W. Winther, pilot of the district Survey Ship H. L. Demeritt, was presented with a War Department emblem for exceptional civilian service by our division engineer, Colonel Edwin H. Marks. Mr. Winther received the award in recognition of his ingenuity in developing a technique for locating aircraft which had fallen into San Francisco Bay which could not be readily located by the sweeping and grappling methods normally used by Army and Navy salvage forces. The importance of Mr. Winther's development is three-fold. It has made possible the early recovery and delivery to next of kin the bodies of crew members of the planes. It has resulted in a considerable saving of time, salvage plant, and personnel, and in one case it recovered an engine of a new type which had failed, causing an accident, and which the Army Air Force was exceedingly anxious to find in order that its defect might be studied.

"Mr. Winther, an engineer department employee for almost 20 years, is believed to be the first in the North or South Pacific divisions to receive the Exceptional Civilian Service Citation. As Ernie's fellow workers we share the feeling of personal pride expressed by Colonel Marks in making the presentation."

This picture\* shows one of the salvaging operations?

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\*Photograph 18.



Winther: They had to bring this barge over. This is the barge to lift the plane on board there. This is one they're lifting up now. They're hoisting it up and that's me standing there.

Teiser: Whose barge was this?

Winther: The Navy's. A salvage barge.

Teiser: And you said they'd grapple around and try to bring up everything they could.

Winther: Yes. After we found it for them.

Teiser: When was this, about?

Winther: This was in the war -- in the early '40s. These show the wreckage -- how the plane comes up in pieces. Here\* it is piled up on the deck of the barge, there.

[Noises of papers] I'm just trying to find you some interesting local pictures . . . . Oh here's one of the planes I was looking for. That's the last plane that fell in the Bay flying from the San Francisco Bay Airport to the Oakland Airport.

Teiser: 1955.

Winther: That happened to be a company plane. One of the private planes other than -- see all the rest of 'em were government planes that I looked for, but this was a private company, I don't know -- I think it was a United Airline that fell in there. And every Tom, Dick and Harry around here was hunting for it and couldn't find it, so I went out there. And I took a picture of this group where they were looking for the plane and they couldn't find it, in that group. And I was about a mile away from it, and I found it, where I was.

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\*Photograph 19.



- Teiser: You were mentioning the log rafts from the Columbia River -- they towed them from the Columbia River all the way down the coast --
- Winther: To San Diego --
- Teiser: What were you saying about --
- Winther: They go adrift. There's a sonar out there that hits them and they go adrift and they have to go out and pick them up and tow them into the nearest port, and so with this one,\* they towed it into Monterey. To demolish it, they had to pull it ashore and wreck it, so it wouldn't hinder navigation.
- Teiser: What did they do with all of those --
- Winther: They put it up for lumber locally down there.
- Teiser: They have a heavy piece of equipment there shoving them around, is that it?
- Winther: Bulldozer. That's the contractor that bought the raft as it's anchored in Monterey Bay, what remains of it. That's about a third of the raft. He's taking it ashore to salvage as much lumber out of it as he can.
- Teiser: That's 1940. And you had to go down and take charge of it?
- Winther: Yes.

The H. L. Demeritt

- Winther: Here's the Demeritt again under way, going out to the San Francisco Bar to do that survey work out there.
- Teiser: "Welcome home, well done!" It says out there on Angel Island. That was just after World War II, I guess, wasn't it?

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\*Photograph 21.





- Winther: They had those signs all over. After the war was over they had those welcome signs for the fleet to come back. Here's the Demeritt again and the different river-line boats laying in here on their pier. We went through that about the burning pier, didn't we?
- Teiser: With the creosote? Yes.
- Winther: This is it, this is the boat.
- Teiser: The Demeritt. How could you get close enough to it without getting scorched?
- Winther: Well, we had to be out enough so we wouldn't get scorched. We did get scorched a little. That concrete pier is ice-cold, you know. There's an enormous big piece of concrete there. When this intense heat hit it, why it exploded, the concrete exploded in small pieces, oh -- say two or three inches in diameter, in a cone-shape. Just flew all over. And of course we got loaded with it. We swept up a couple of buckets of that concrete off our decks. That's something you don't think about when that intense heat hits anything how that reaction happens there.
- Teiser: The creosote had been put on wood, had it?
- Winther: It's a wooden fender system around there, to protect it. That's hung around there, you know. It's made out of 12 x 12s, 10 x 10s, according to the size of the job. Fresh creosote just burns like gasoline. And the hot rivets from the upper deck where they were working fell down and ignited it.
- Teiser: And you said that then a crew of fire-fighters was brought to the pier. . .
- Winther: By their own boat. The bridge contractors'. And they were there to fight the fire. Well they were throwing buckets of water on this creosote, to put it out, and it was just like so much gasoline; had



- Winther: no effect on that hot creosote. The flames at that time were up to the lower deck of the bridge. When I got these fellows off, the fire was going around the whole fender system and it was just up to the boat when we pulled away -- when the last man was taken aboard!
- Teiser: And was this explosion of the concrete happening constantly?
- Winther: Yes. Constantly. Flying all the time just like shrapnel. But the funny part of it is the shape that broke off. It's just like a cone -- you know -- popped it out. Why it should come out in that shape is a mystery to me, but that's what happened. 'Course all over the top, the sides it didn't. It was just where the heat was so intense. That was quite a flame. Then the San Francisco fireboats come over and put it out.
- Teiser: Why didn't they get there in the first place?
- Winther: It was quite a ways, you know; you got four miles to go.
- Teiser: How many men were there that you took off?
- Winther: Nineteen.
- Teiser: It's not a very big area, is it?
- Winther: Oh, yes. Quite a size.
- Teiser: Is there a platform around it?
- Winther: No, no platform -- it's only a slope, like that.\*

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\*See also pp. 75-76



Surveying the Coast, 1928-1929

Winther: After I left Don Lee I went to the Geodetic Survey -- that's a coastal survey. We surveyed the coast of California.

Teiser: You did? What boat were you on?

Winther: Well they chartered a boat called Mianus. We took it from the beach out to 20 fathoms and the big boat took it from 20 fathoms out to sea as far as they could go.

Teiser: Did you take soundings, was it that?

Winther: Oh yes. Lead line soundings. And it was 75 years -- now this was in '28 -- and it was 75 years before they did any soundings. They did it in them days just by rowing a boat. Nope, they didn't have power then.

Teiser: You mean the last one was in the 1850's?

Winther: Yes. And their work was so accurate that there was very little change noticed in our work. They were that accurate in them days.

Teiser: Isn't that amazing?

Winther: It sure is. Of course they were slower, pulling a boat before power; the same method -- hand-line soundings, and they covered the same territory we did. Of course the older charts show that. All these present charts you got now are the soundings they took in '28 and '29. They don't do it too often, about every fifty or a hundred years.

Teiser: I imagine the ocean coastline doesn't change much, but the Bay does.

Winther: Oh, the Bay does due to so much silt coming into it.

Teiser: But how about the ocean?

Winther: No, that remains the same -- just about the same.



Teiser: How long did it take you to do the survey?

Winther: A year and a half. We went from Crescent City down to Point Sur -- Big Sur. 'Course then the season was over -- you have to work in . . . I don't know whether it's the money appropriations, or the season. Of course there was a higher authority than we was on there you know. Have to take orders from higher authorities.

Teiser: What was your official position on that boat?

Winther: Captain. Yes, that was exciting.

Teiser: How many people did you have altogether?

Winther: On that crew for that job? There was seven.

Teiser: You were about to say it was exciting because -- what?

Winther: It was very exciting at times when you'd get into the breakers and almost get pushed ashore. It's a tough job. You work from see to can't see. [Laughter] Long hours. Then there's all kinds of weather. I've seen some days it'd be so smooth you could not detect a bit of swell on the ocean surface. And then when you're working in a howling nor'wester, they don't stop for anything, keep going!

Teiser: You worked through the winter?

Winther: Well, worked till the money ran out. Start any time.

Teiser: They don't try to just do 'em in the summer months?

Winther: It covered the summer -- oh yes, it covered that. But we'd keep on going until the funds run out. [Laughter] Then you'd quit.

Teiser: Well, you know a lot about the bottoms of these waterways.

Winther: Oh you get to know the bottom pretty well. We had a method there. We used what they call a curve chart. You could throw an object overboard, take the location





Winther: of it, and come back any time, a year or so later, to the same spot and find it. That's how accurate the survey method was.

Teiser: What kind of an object?

Winther: Why anything! Throw a pin overboard if you could [laughter] . . . anything -- we'd come right to that exact spot anytime we wanted to on this curve chart method. It had fixed objects ashore you took angles from. And on this curve chart -- you make it up, it's so accurate it'll put you right on the spot. That had to be that way or the surveys wouldn't be worth anything.

### Water Quality

Winther: We were going to go through some of this chart work here. Let me see -- did you get one for up the river? Did you want to know anything about . . .?

Teiser: Yes! Let's see what you think of as you look at it, what you recall.

Winther: Now here's San Pablo Bay. I can tell you something about the fresh water. Well, the Crockett sugar refinery, you know. . .

Teiser: C & H?

Winther: C & H. They used to get their fresh water right off the dock, right where they're located up there now. That used to be all fresh water. And then when they did the dredging, straightened out some of the turns of the Sacramento River and the San Joaquin River, why the salt water reached a little further and lessened the flow of the fresh water. So the sugar company then had to build barges, 'specially -- made barges, to load fresh water. They'd tow 'em up the river and sink 'em, fill 'em full of fresh water and tow 'em down to the factory. And that's why they had to use fresh water there, because the Crockett sugar outfit uses a tremendous lot of fresh water, you know, in their work . . .



Teiser: And they used river water?

Winther: Oh, that was so fresh and clean, they could do it in them days. And then finally they had to tow it so far that off San Quentin they built a wharf and put a fresh water pipeline out to the wharf and then they brought the barges there to fill up. The dock is still there at San Quentin, but they used it now for a fishing pier. So finally they had to go so far for water and it got so costly that they eventually put in a pipeline from the Hetch-Hetchy, I believe, over to their plant now. Or it comes down from the Mokelumne River, up by Sacramento.

Teiser: Do they use it for washing the sugar?

Winther: In their processing of the sugar cane.

Teiser: Then they discharge it into the Bay?

Winther: Oh, yes.

Teiser: In the Carquinez Straits?

Winther: They are on Carquinez Straits. They're located right in here, see; there's that dock. That's the Crockett sugar refinery. And they had to come with their barges clear down over in here [when] they built a dock.

Teiser: To San Quentin.

Winther: They towed those barges. And this water used to be so fresh, right in here . . .

Teiser: In the Carquinez Straits . . .

Winther: That you could drink it without tasting any salt at all. Of course Napa is another place up here.

Teiser: Oh yes, Napa Creek. There was navigation up there wasn't there?

Winther: Oh beautiful! That was a very picturesque river at one time. There were trees on both sides of the bank with their limbs bent over and touching the water. It was a very pretty river until the pollution got so bad up there it killed all the trees.



Teiser: What pollution?

Winther: There used to be a tannery up here. And they polluted that river pretty bad. Destroyed everything. And of course all the sewerage from that state hospital. All went out into the river. And it is a hospital with a lot of chemicals; just imagine what a hospital discharges into the Bay. No wonder we haven't got anything.

Teiser: That river now, the little I've seen of it, is not very beautiful.

Winther: Not now. But it was very pretty looking -- monstrous big trees of all types just grew up, and the limbs would bend down and touch the water, and then when the passenger boats used to run up there they used to brush these limbs in the narrow places.

Teiser: Did many passenger boats go up there?

Winther: Oh, yes. Had one going up there called the St. Helena, had a steady run up there on a schedule.

Teiser: Carry some little freight too?

Winther: Yes. Freight and passengers. I went up there with a horse and wagon on it one time.

Teiser: How come?

Winther: Well, I had a place up in Pope Valley, had a few acres up in Pope Valley, so we brought the horse and wagon up that way. Went over Mt. St. Helena.

Teiser: When was that?

Winther: That was in 1912.

Teiser: What kind of a place did you have in Pope Valley?

Winther: Oh, we had a little -- just a few acres -- ten-acre place. Just building it up. But it's wild, plenty wild in there. But the soil is too gravelly to grow anything. So it didn't make out. But anyway we had that experience.



Milton S. Ray and Further Farallon Recollections

Winther: So I don't know how much further here we could go unless you fire away with a few questions.

Teiser: Do you have other photographs that we could look at?

Winther: Yes, I got some new ones I just found. Here about the Farallones. [Pause] There's one here I want to ask you about. This fella here, is Milton S. Ray,\* a bird botanologist, he's in here. He was on the Farallones and he wrote this article here about the Farallones and I think he's registered in the University of California. I remember he used to say he had to go over there every so often. [Telephone rings, pause here.]

Teiser: Let me put this article on the record. This is in a publication called, The Auk, a quarterly journal of ornithology, for October, 1904, Vol. 21, No.4. "A Fortnight on the Farallones," by Milton S. Ray. This was when that picture was taken, was it?

Winther: Yes.

Teiser: It's an interesting article, good pictures. He describes some of the birds. And he's inscribed this copy to you.

Winther: I guess it's on account of this. Read those, right in there; of course he got the name spelled wrong.

Teiser: [Reading] "Most of the birds, however, had young in or out of the nest, and Ernest Wenthars (spelled wrong, but you!), a promising young bird student, says that start nest-building early in March, for he had noticed eggs in the latter part, and must raise two if not three broods in a season." Well that was pretty good. You were fourteen years old. You were a pretty observant kid.

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\*See also p. 16.





Winther: Oh, I tried to get into everything.

Here's quite an article on Mr. Ray.

Teiser: Oh, yes. This is, "How We Braved Death to Find the World's Rarest Bird," by Milton S. Ray. "The remarkable feat of two American bird lovers who climbed 10,000 feet and got a bird's nest and four eggs." [Laughter] Where was this?

Winther: Up in the Sierras.

Teiser: February 26, 1911. "Copyright by American Examiner." Well he really was an avid bird man, wasn't he?

Winther: Yes. He was one of the best. Now here, this is a rock called Sugar Loaf, out on the Farallones.

Teiser: Taken from a boat.

Winther: And this is one of the contract boats that ran out there.

Teiser: To bring you your supplies?

Winther: Provisions and mail. This here is the lighthouse crew. They went fishing and each one has a fish. That happens to be my father, there in the middle.

Teiser: What kind of fish have they?

Winther: Rock cod.

Teiser: Did you often catch rock cod that big?

Winther: Oh yes -- well that's small.

Teiser: Really?

Winther: For that area, they're small fish.

Teiser: How big did they get?

Winther: I've seen 'em four feet long. 'Course I don't know what they weigh.



Teiser: You caught them to eat? Not for just fun?

Winther: That's it.

That's the murre. That's the way they nest out there.

Teiser: Looks like they nest right out in the open.

Winther: They don't bother building a nest like other birds.

Here's some of the population out there.

Teiser: Oh, those are the seals!

Winther: These are pictures that were taken in 1892. Here's the fog signal out there.

Teiser: What building is this?

Winther: Oh that's just where they kept the coal.

Teiser: And what about the building 'way off to the right here?

Winther: That's a residence. And that's the cistern with the fresh water. Do you see these two cisterns? Where the fresh water is kept; for the personnel and for the steam boilers for the steam fog signal. Here's the families, out there. See 'em? Clothes didn't amount to anything. You wore any old thing.

Teiser: This is a different picture of the families from the one we looked at earlier.

Winther: This is the third assistant keeper. There's my mother. That's me. There's my brother. And this family: this is the keeper out there, the first assistant keeper, and that's his wife. They're all gathered up. You can see how rough they are -- they don't go in for the latest style clothes.

Teiser: The man right of your father is . . .

Winther: Cashin, the third assistant keeper.

Teiser: And next to him is a woman.



Winther: My mother.

Teiser: What was her maiden name?

Winther: Carrie Petersen.

Teiser: And next to her is you. How old were you do you think?

Winther: I was about two or three. 'Course I was out there when I was a year old, when the boat capsized, see, so that was about a year later, I guess.

Teiser: Then next to you is . . .

Winther: My brother. Carl.

Teiser: Next to him?

Winther: I don't remember the names of those youngsters.

Teiser: And this man holding the baby?

Winther: That was the first assistant keeper. Cain. The woman is his wife. Here's a natural arch rock out there. That's on the west end of the island.

Now this is a sailing vessel, the kind that used to come into San Francisco Harbor, going out to sea.

Teiser: It was pretty close to the Farallones.

Winther: Oh, yes. They run pretty close there.

Teiser: How far, about?

Winther: That boat there is off about a mile and a half.

Teiser: Do they still run that close?

Winther: Oh, the steamers -- yes, they still do that. Here's the zig]zag trail going up to the light up here.\* When you had to climb that, you . . .

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\*Photograph 8.



- Teiser: This picture shows the light at the top. There's a little piece of a building over there. That's that stone house, is it? And this building in the center?
- Winther: Just a little shed.
- Teiser: And this on the right . . .
- Winther: Is the residence for the second and third assistants. . .
- Teiser: And this is just a rocky field, is it? What grew in there?
- Winther: A grass that you don't see ashore here anywhere. You don't see that type of grass that grows out there on the mainland at all.
- Teiser: Is that what the goats ate?
- Winther: That's what the goats ate. Of course they were more or less wild, you know; they shift for themselves. But the mule we had there for pulling that car around, they had hay and grain for that one.
- Teiser: I see somebody's got a big wash hanging out back there. [Laughter] Must have been a chore washing out there.
- Winther: All hand washing, all the old washboards.
- Teiser: Were there many fields this rocky?
- Winther: The whole flat part of the island is covered. A lot of them are loose and a lot of them are solid.
- Teiser: What color are they?
- Winther: Say gray; light and dark gray.
- Teiser: How long did it take you to climb up the trail to the light?
- Winther: Oh, about ten minutes. Pretty steep.





- Teiser: How long did it take you to run down?
- Winther: Ho-ho! The law of gravity took you down. [Both laugh] Oh, you went down there in five minutes easy.
- Teiser: Was there any vegetation on the hillside at all?
- Winther: Very little. Mostly on the flat down here. 'Course, as I said before, that's all rotten granite.
- Teiser: What's that photograph?
- Winther: It's kind of faded, but that's an old, old picture. 1891 or '02.
- Teiser: Then that's you, you were one or two years old.
- Winther: Yes, that's my brother, me, my mother and father. And that rock, that's the type of buildings that the Russians, when they had that island, the Russians built 'em out of stone. 'Course later on they reverted to chicken-houses for the lighthouse keepers.
- Teiser: The stone building?
- Winther: Yes. We changed 'em into chick-houses. Every lighthouse keeper over there had his own flock of chickens.
- Teiser: Do you mean you took the stones and rebuilt them?
- Winther: No, they were there. They built 'em so good that they stayed up for years.
- Teiser: Are there any left now?
- Winther: Remains.\* There might be one or two.
- Teiser: What did the Russians construct them for, do you think?

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\*See photograph 7. See also pp. 19-20.



Winther: They used to do a lot of sealing on this coast. And hunting otter. And fur seals. That's what they had.

Teiser: What did they use the buildings for? To live in, or to store things in?

Winther: I think for living in. I think they used to be living quarters for them people in them days.

Teiser: What part of the island was that on?

Winther: That's the south end of the island.

Teiser: Near the living quarters?

Winther: Yes. The living quarters is maybe five hundred feet from where this was.

Teiser: That's a fine family [in the photograph].

Winther: That's the pastime they had in them days -- taking pictures. There was no phonographs, or no musical instruments, or amusement at all. Kind of isolated. Had to guess what was going on in the world.

Here's a picture of a sea parrot.

Teiser: That's a beauty, isn't it?

Winther: [Laughter] A beauty? I don't know -- that's some of my work. I did that.

Teiser: Oh, you did painting too?

Winther: I had some watercolor. I started to draw pictures of all the birds, and I only got that far. Something happened. I had to quit some way or other.

Teiser: [Laughter] January 4, 1905. You were fifteen.

Winther: At a distance that looks pretty good, but up close, you know . . . That's exactly the color of them -- the way they look.

Teiser: How did you get watercolors out there? Just ask



Teiser: somebody to bring 'em out to you?

Winther: Yes, you order 'em, and it comes out in a kind of an order on boat day.

"Old 70" and the Lime Point Fog Signal

Winther: Here's the light vessel -- that same light vessel -- that stays nine miles out in the main ship channel.

Teiser: [Reading] "San Francisco 70."

Winther: I don't know what year that picture was taken. Of course it's not marked or anything. It's right after -- she was a new vessel then -- and it's right after they put her out here.

Teiser: You don't mean that same ship is out there now?

Winther: Oh, no. They've changed several times. But that's the "Old 70," the first one that was put out there.

Teiser: What kind of power did that have?

Winther: Steam. The new ones all have diesel.

Teiser: You'd have to carry coal then, and power it with coal?

Winther: Oh, yes.

Teiser: How big a ship?

Winther: I think she was around 110 feet. Specially built, of course. The hull for that kind of work is specially built.

Teiser: What properties does it have to have?

Winther: It's just the design. Merchant vessels are straight up and down on the sides; well, this one is sloped and the bottom of it is much wider than the deck.



Teiser: Oh, so it would ride out there -- is that it?

Winther: That's it. Take care of any kind of weather. Stay right there.

Teiser: What do you call this dimension in a hull?

Winther: That's the draft. I think she drew ten or 14 feet.

Teiser: How many people in the crew?

Winther: I think it was around 30. A lot of 'em stand watches, you know.

Teiser: They stayed out there for how long at a time?

Winther: A year.

Teiser: Do you mean to say it didn't come in for a year?

Winther: Annual overhaul.

Teiser: Here it's in in front of the coal yard, I guess, the New Wellington. How did it happen to be in there?

Winther: Well, either coaling up or it went in for repairs. That Wellington, that's over in San Francisco. That old Wellington coal, used to be on the waterfront in San Francisco.

Teiser: How'd you happen to have the picture?

Winther: Oh, it was given to us.

Teiser: You weren't involved with that?

Winther: No.

Teiser: I went to a party at the Lime Point lighthouse about 1940.

Winther: Do you remember what kind of a fog signal they had? They used to have a big steam whistle. You could hear it 'way over in Oakland here when they operated it. That sound travelled that far. That was an enormous, big, deep whistle.





Bodega Bay

Winther: And here [looking at photograph] we're building the harbor up in Bodega Bay, and one of the fellows is laying out some of the work on a chart there, and here's some of the survey equipment.

Teiser: [Reading] "Surveying Bodega Bay, 1941."

Winther: This is a preliminary survey for the breakwaters. Have you been up there?

Teiser: Yes, recently.

Winther: Right where we were working is all State park now, and this is the preliminary survey for building those rock walls. See, it was after '41 when those breakwaters were put in. And that's the way it looked before those breakwaters were put in. And right where this picture was taken is dry land, and those two big breakwaters.

Teiser: Oh, yes. And what kind of a boat was this? A barge?

Winther: Yes, it was a barge. We built that barge ourselves. A lot of the time you have to build your own equipment to get the work done.

Teiser: There's now a big spit that's a state park beach, that's connected by a neck of land . . .

Winther: That big beach? Well, that filled in after the breakwater was built. Nature built that. All that sand spit, that high and dry stuff, was put in by a dredger that was up there to deepen the harbor. So that's what you call the spoils. Went out there and made that ground which the state took over for a state park. Hundreds and hundreds of people go out there every year.

And this [picture] is our latest survey boat. This boat here I designed myself.

Teiser: Oh, you did? What special qualifications does it have for the work?



Winther: It's a good, sea-worthy boat; it can take a good-sized crew, hold a big load; and carry our survey stakes, which were two-by-twos twenty feet long, we had to use quite a bit.

Teiser: "Bodega Bay, 195." How long a boat was it?

Winther: That boat was 19 foot.

Teiser: Well, then, you got into ship building as well as operating them?

Winther: Yes. That there model is my first . . . [pointing to it]

Teiser: Oh yes, your ship model. [Laughter] From small to large.

Winther: It comes natural to you, you know, when you're around the water all your life.

Teiser: I should think that the first thing you would have learned would have been to swim, but I guess . . . Southampton Shoals you couldn't, could you?

Winther: No, the water's too cold, and too severe tides there, you know. But maybe I would've tackled it a little oftener if it was a little warmer. The water along this coast, you know, hangs around 42 degrees.

#### The Tiburon Coaling Station and the Quarantine Ship

Winther: If there's something that you want to ask about, why go ahead and ask it and see if I can figure . . .

Teiser: I think you've told a lot about each of the things that I know were in your experience.

Winther: 'Course there were some buildings, that the government used to have around the Bay, such as the coaling station over at Tiburon. The government used to burn coal on the Naval vessels. Well they had a big coaling station over there at Tiburon on the east



Winther: side of the shoreline, and it was quite nice to see different ships come over there and coal up.

Teiser: They have a big wharf?

Winther: It was built right on the shoreline in 60 feet of water. So it was a little deep to drive piles out into that, and these piles were special. They were four-foot steel cylinders filled with concrete. And they had to be pretty long to penetrate the bottom and still sustain that tremendous weight, of those big cranes that would handle the coal. And around 1906 and '07, we used to have a quarantine vessel called the Omaha, used to be anchored up there, and when ships came in with a sickness aboard, they used to go alongside and get quarantined. Go alongside this old-time Naval vessel and get quarantined. And some of the passengers and crew, when they were too severe, would go into the quarantine station on Angel Island. There used to be a quarantine station there which is now abandoned, but some of the buildings and wharf are still there, but that's also a state park now.

Teiser: What did the quarantine vessel do?

Winther: Fumigated the vessel that had the sickness aboard.

Teiser: Well, where'd the people go?

Winther: They'd take those people ashore and put 'em on Angel Island in these different buildings and keep 'em there until the doctor thought they were fit to get out into the public again.

Teiser: But this quarantine ship had fumigation equipment aboard it?

Winther: Oh yes. That used to lay between Tiburon and San Quentin. That was their station. Oh, we'd see ships come up there about once or twice a year, in that condition to get fumigated.

Teiser: How long did it stay there?



Winther: When I first noticed it, I came from the Farallones out here, that was in 1906.

Teiser: When was the last time you remember it being there?

Winther: Oh, I think they abandoned that system in '07 or '08. Took the ship away. Of course they sold it for junk. They were loaded -- those vessels in them days were built with a lot of copper, lot of copper bolts in 'em. So some junk man bought it, and burned her up for the metal. That's a sad sight. They shouldn't have done that; those old historical Naval vessels were very valuable.

### Shipyards

Teiser: What were the shipyards in the early days?

Winther: Well, San Francisco had several of 'em down there by Islais Creek, towards Hunter's Point. 'Course the Union Iron Works had the largest -- they'd take care of any vessel, and Moore's -- Moore's shipyard up in the Oakland Estuary. And Hanlon's shipyard up in the Oakland Estuary. Doing that same type of work.

Teiser: There were small ones down around Hunter's Point, though?

Winther: That's where most of the river boats were built, down around Hunter's Point.

Teiser: Do you remember the names of the yards?

Winther: Right now I just don't remember . . . yes, there was three of 'em down there that I knew of. Of course there were more, but the ones I was familiar with and we had experience with 'em.

Teiser: Did they do repairs too?

Winther: Repairs and building, yes. That's where most of the river boats were repaired and built. Can't think of the name right now, isn't that funny?





Teiser: George W. Kneass?

Winther: He built another type of boat. He had his shipyard down there and . . .

Teiser: What type of boat did he build?

Winther: Tugs, barges . . . The smaller type and most all these early boats that Crowley used to have.

Teiser: You were going to add some further recollections about the shipyards. You said you recalled John Twigg.

Winther: And Munder's ways.

Teiser: Were they ship repairers?

Winther: They were general ship work, repairs and building new vessels, especially the ones that went to Sacramento and Stockton -- the stern wheelers, passenger boats. They built quite a few of them -- small, large, anything that was on order.

Teiser: How large was the largest of them? How big a ship could they handle?

Winther: Around three hundred feet.

Teiser: Did you know the people there who were in charge of Munders?

Winther: I just knew the owners, mainly.

Teiser: Who were they?

Winther: Munder family. And the Anderson family [of Anderson's Ship Yard and Marine Ways]. They also built vessels there. They built tugboats, and any local bay boats that we had around here. They took charge of that.

Teiser: They were both down in the southern part of the city?

Winther: In the Hunter's Point area. Of course it's all gone, now. There's not hardly a pile left to recognize the place.



- Teiser: What happened to it? Where did it go?
- Winther: Well, they just run out of business. It took them many, many years. Maybe a family had been there nearly a hundred years.
- Teiser: And when they went out of business did they just let the buildings stand?
- Winther: They let it really decay. What they did really decayed.
- Teiser: Were there other ship builders?
- Winther: Some on the Oakland side, but not as many as on the south San Francisco side, down by Hunter's Point. That's where they were all concentrated -- in that area. So they had a good business. It was quite a lot of business going on. They built barges, also.
- Teiser: About when did all that stop?
- Winther: Around 1915 it started to decay.

### Jack London's Toothache

- Teiser: You mentioned that you had a story about Jack London.
- Winther: Well, around 1908, Jack London was a great sailor and he had his own boat -- he had several, and one was the Snark. With the Snark he was going up the river locally in it. There was him and his wife and his houseboy. That's the only crew that he had aboard.
- Teiser: Japanese houseboy? Chinese houseboy?
- Winther: Japanese. He was going up the Bay one day, right past the Southampton lighthouse, and so I was going ashore to get the mail at that time, and he was becalmed, so while I passed him he waved to me to come over. He asked me if I knew how he could get to a doctor.



Winther: I said, "Well, I'll have to take you in to Richmond. The only doctor around here is in Point Richmond."

So he agreed to let me tow him in. I towed him into the Richmond Harbor.

Teiser: You were pulling your own boat?

Winther: I had the first outboard motor that ever hit San Francisco Bay.

Teiser: Oh, you did?

Winther: I towed him in with that -- this skiff with the outboard motor on it. I brought him up to a doctor. He had a severe toothache, so I brought him up to a dentist in Point Richmond and then left him there, and I never seen him since.

Teiser: Did he thank you?

Winther: Oh, yes.

Teiser: Was he a nice guy?

Winther: He was a very fine guy, very sociable fellow. And of course he was in his younger years then -- I think around 35 or 40 at that time.

Teiser: Was his wife pretty?

Winther: She was a very pretty girl, short -- about your size.\* Very pretty girl, and just the three of them were going. I don't know if they ever went up the river or not when he got through with the dentist.

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\*Five feet, two and a half inches.



The First Outboard Motor on the Bay

- Teiser: Let me ask you more about your outboard motor. Had you just got it in 1908?
- Winther: I was working -- not on a salary, but every once in a while I'd bring a couple of councilmen from Richmond up for hunting, and I'd be pulling ashore all the time. They thought that was a sad case, for me to have to pull five miles ashore, so they agreed to buy me an outboard motor. So I went over to San Francisco and picked one out. There was only one to pick out!
- Teiser: Oh really? Where did you find it?
- Winther: An agency there on -- I believe it was Market Street -- in San Francisco. It was an Evinrude. It was very, very heavy for a single cylinder -- run by batteries before the magneto type ever come out.
- Teiser: By batteries?
- Winther: The ignition was in those batteries. Dry cells that they don't make anymore.
- Teiser: They must have been expensive, weren't they?
- Winther: They were sold at that time for twenty-five to thirty cents apiece. Today they're a dollar to a dollar and a half apiece -- if you can get them.
- That turned out pretty nice, although the single cylinder had a terrific lot of vibration. And they had nothing but cast iron and brass. There wasn't any aluminum in them days.
- Teiser: How much did it cost?
- Winther: If I'm not mistaken, I think around sixty dollars, and that was a lot of money.

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Panorama, 1901 or 1902.

3



Lighthouse keepers' houses, 1903.



Lighthouse keepers and families, about 1893.

FARALLON ISLANDS

2



4



Fog signal (left) and buildings, 1903.



Fog signal, 1902 or 1903.

6



North landing and Black Stack Tug, about 1903.



Remains of Russian building, 1904.



8



House and lighthouse, about 1903.

9



North landing, 1904.

10



Track from landing, with mule.

11



North landing, 1903. Ernest W. Winther at left.





12



Ernest W. Winther at left, Milton S. Ray at right, with murrelets, 1904.



Ernest W. Winther at cave entrance, 1904.

14



Spars and driftwood left on rocks by storm before 1900. Photograph taken about 1904.

15



Stone house, about 1904.





Submarine Grampus, about 1910.



Southampton Shoal lighthouse, 1908



Airplane salvaging operations, San Francisco Bay, World War II.







H. L. Demeritt at Pier 3 1/2, San Francisco, 1930s.



Log raft ashore at Monterey. December 1940.



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